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MARIA PEARSON,

Authoress of 'From Rome to Mentana,'

AND

LOUISA ELISABETH MACLAUGHLIN.

'Fields have been sown with blood,
And lust of conquest hath sore reaping time:
The land is desolate till Charity sublime
Pours forth her stores of food.'
REV. C. BULLOCK (*Worcester*).

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

LONDON:
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1871.

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TO THE

HONORABLE GEORGIANA RUSHOUT,

FOR WHOSE GENEROUS AID AND SYMPATHY

IN OUR EFFORTS

TO RELIEVE THE SICK AND WOUNDED IN THE LATE WAR,

WE OWE A DEBT OF GRATITUDE,

This Book is Dedicated

BY HER SINCERE AND AFFECTIONATE

EMMA MARIA PEARSON

AND

LOUISA ELISABETH MACLAUGHLIN.

JUNE 1871.

PREFACE.

OUR AIM in the volumes we present to the kindly consideration of our English friends, has been not only to give a simple and truthful sketch of personal experiences, during the campaigns of 1870–71, but to show the evils war inflicts on those who take no active part in it, its degrading influence on national character, and the cruel sufferings of an invaded country.

In speaking of our great National Society for the Relief of the Sick and Wounded in War, we have given a straightforward statement of our transactions with them. No attempt has been made to enter into any discussion as to

the causes of what we consider to have been much of failure in carrying out the great work before them.

Their intentions were, undoubtedly, the noblest and best; and if, unfortunately, their services should again be required, they will have learnt wisdom and economy by the past.

That our sympathies were and are French we do not deny. We lived amongst them, and were daily witnesses of their miseries. But we have tried to do justice to all, and to record our gratitude to the officers of the German army, whose kindness, with a few exceptions, was unvarying.

EMMA MARIA PEARSON,
LOUISA ELISABETH MACLAUGHLIN.

BORASTON RECTORY, TENBURY: *June* 1871.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Start for the War	1
II.	An Express Train	17
III.	The Two Châteaux	33
IV.	The Midnight Drive	55
V.	The Knights of St. John	75
VI.	The Rescue	97
VII.	The Burning of the Red-Cross Banner	119
VIII.	The Chase after the King	139
IX.	England to the Rescue	162
X.	Alone on the Hills	194
XI.	The Last Hours of the Empire	216
XII.	The Saddest Scene of All	236

CHAPTER		PAGE
XIII.	A Miserable Village	265
XIV.	To England and Back	291
XV.	Louise's Letter	308
XVI.	Caserne Asfelde	328
XVII.	Under Whose Orders?	348

OUR ADVENTURES

DURING THE

WAR OF 1870.

CHAPTER I.

THE START FOR THE WAR.

LIFE in an invaded country, overrun by the troops of a foreign power, is in every respect so different from life in our peaceful English land, that the simple record of personal adventures and impressions during a residence in various parts of France in the autumn of 1870, and the winter and early spring of 1871, may help to realise the horrors and the demoralisation of War to the minds of those who happily never knew by experience what is the sad condition of provinces in military

occupation of an enemy, the domestic state of their towns and villages, and the sufferings of all classes from details of misery which naturally are overlooked by the military and special war correspondents of the English journals. They record faithfully what they see, but much escapes their notice as they follow the advance or retreat of the contending armies. Many of these miseries are the necessary consequences of war, but are often aggravated by the violence of the victorious soldiery, and the utter want of comprehension which must exist when an excited trooper endeavours to explain in an unknown tongue to a frightened peasant what is required of him. Whilst wishing to do every justice to both belligerent powers, it must be admitted that the impatience of a German soldier, when his harsh gutturals fail to produce any effect on the understanding of those around him, is something perfectly horrible, and his howls and yells enough

to drive an unoffending citizen into a state of distraction. During our sojourn in this unhappy land of France we met with many instances of this, and many lives were lost simply from this unfortunate want of knowledge of a few words of each other's language.

I must premise before fairly starting the story of our lives during this great war, that from the first Louise and myself formed a deep attachment to each other, our sympathies on almost every point were the same, and we became inseparable companions. If in writing this sketch of our adventures I am obliged to use the singular and egotistical pronoun 'I' in many places, it is only to avoid the difficulty of describing scenes in which each took a separate part. There was no danger, no hardship, no adventure, she did not equally share; and as we sit side by side, recalling the events we witnessed, and looking over the diary she kept, whilst we feel it is far better one should act as scribe, we beg it distinctly

to be understood our little work is a joint composition.

No idle curiosity brought us to the seat of war: we formed part of what was called, in France, 'the English Column,' sent from 'the British National Society for the Relief of the Sick and Wounded in War,' and consisting, when it started, of four ladies, a paid nurse, a surgeon, and a secretary, and with orders to repair directly to the King's head-quarters for service with the Prussian army.

We left London for Dover on the night of August 16, with all the fresh enthusiasm of untried soldiers, determined not to spend on ourselves a shilling more than we could help of the Society's money; and so sternly resolved to go through any amount of hardship, that we should have been actually annoyed if any amount of decent comfort had been predicted as our lot. On our arrival we went on board the Ostend boat, beginning our course of self-denial by taking

second-class tickets; however, the second-class cabin was an utter impossibility: we got ready to bivouac on deck, and commence campaigning experiences by passing a night in the open air. We did not, I am afraid, reflect sufficiently, as I was afterwards told, on the dignity of the great Society whose pioneers in active personal work we were, or how incumbent it was upon us to keep it up under all circumstances. In harbour the sea was calm, and the night seemed fine. We were soon undeceived. I believe it rained, I know it blew; but except a consciousness of suffering, we were beyond all speculations on any subject. We had wrapped ourselves up in our railway rugs, and spread our water-proof sheets over us; but it was all in vain: the spray dashed over us, the cold wind chilled us; and the only consolation we had was, that happen what might, we never could be more wretched —we had reached the Ultima Thule of misery.

But morning and Ostend came at last, and

we crawled to the custom-house, where our baggage was to be examined. The Red Cross marked upon it saved us all trouble on that score, but the boxes sent out with us by the Committee were a great trial. They showed a wonderful facility for coming to pieces on the slightest provocation, and depositing their contents by the way; and we were very glad to register them through to Aix-la-Chapelle, which was our first destination. But from that day to this we never saw them again. They did arrive at last at Aix, but the expense of forwarding them was more than the worth of them, and they were probably opened, and their contents used for the Hospitals there. They contained bandages, linen rags, and some second-hand shirts and socks; also two pairs of white kid gloves—for what purpose sent is a mystery. All through the war, much was sent out that was utterly useless, much that was not worth carriage. I mention this to show how much money and

labour was wasted in this gigantic effort to alleviate measureless human suffering, from want of practical experience, and a due consideration of the fitness of things. Second-hand under clothing, unless almost new, will not bear one washing. Bandages especially do not answer the expense of sending out; they weigh very heavily; calico can be always purchased near the scene of action, and they cost far less made on the spot.

We lost no time in proceeding to Brussels, where we arrived at noon; and having a letter to deliver to the President of the International Society there, I went at once, accompanied by one of the ladies, to the committee rooms. It was a singular proceeding. A number of letters were read which had no particular bearing on any subject, and the affair was getting dull, when a lady begged permission to address the meeting. The gravity with which the Chairman and Committee listened to the tale of her grievances was really ludicrous. It seemed

some other zealous lady had refused to allow her collection of linen and charpie to be added to the general collection, though a special portion of space had been allotted to the contributions of the faubourgs and villages around. This ambitious village declined to disappear in the general mass of villages, had taken back its bales, had set up for itself under the presidentship of the ambitious lady, and had even presumed to seek for aid in the city. Such insubordination and poaching upon other people's manors could not be allowed: the lady of the village was to be duly admonished that the lady of the city would not stand it, and the village was temporarily excommunicated. How the affair ended, of course I have no means of knowing, but I hope by a reconciliation between city and suburb.

Next morning we duly repaired to the station, where we met the secretary, who had been detained by the charge of bringing out five hundred pounds' worth of very valuable

stores for our use: instead of having to wait for his arrival at Aix-la-Chapelle, we were enabled thus to proceed direct to Luxembourg en route for Saarbruck and the front.

We arrived early in the evening. It was a sunny August day, and the little town of Luxembourg looked actually sleepy in the light of the setting sun. War might have been a thousand miles away for any signs we could see of it there, but there were rumours that sounds of heavy firing had come on the still summer air to the quiet neutral town, and it was true: only thirty miles away, across the frontier, was Metz, and that day was one of the terrible three days' struggle called by the Germans the battle of Gravelotte, by the French the battle of St. Privat. It was the great struggle after which Bazaine retreated within his lines, and the ring of the besiegers closed round him and his army, and left famine to do its work in the doomed city. The battle covered a great space of ground, on which stood

many small villages, and it is called by the various names of these by the soldiers of different corps.

Next day we left for Saarbruck, and at the station met a gentlemanly Englishman, evidently a soldier, who entered into conversation with some of our party, and whom we afterwards called 'the General' when he took command of us a few days later. All went well till we reached a way-side station, called Wasserbillig: here the line was cut, and we were transferred to an omnibus, and our baggage to country waggons. As we drove slowly along we saw on our left an ancient Roman tomb in three storeys. There was sculpture in bas-relief still left upon it that showed its occupant had been some great warrior, but its situation was its chief beauty in our eyes. Its history was then and is still unknown to us—what celebrated chieftain slept there, or what event it was built to record; but there it stood, at

the head of a gorge that, opening between deep-wooded banks, gave a view of the fertile plain below, with the blue Moselle winding through it. Those old Romans knew how to build, and where to place their buildings. They were at once artists and architects.

At last we reached Trèves. The station was crowded with soldiers; and, as we lingered on the broad steps leading up to it, and whilst the secretary was enquiring for the waggons, which had not yet come up with us, the General, in opening his valise to take out something, showed his papers and his passport, which proved he was the real Simon Pure. Now when he had given his name at Luxembourg, the secretary had chosen to doubt the fact: we had believed in it, and we enjoyed a little triumph in informing him that we were right, and he was wrong. The proof was too clear, and the secretary admitted his error, and permitted us to present the General with a little white shield, on

which was a red velvet cross, to place in his hat, like those we had made for the secretary and our surgeon, Mr. Parker, and which the General had admired and wished for.

We had to wait at Trèves for the baggage, and we went into the station to try and find a refreshment room; but in war time, as we found, refreshment rooms and waiting rooms are all invaded and taken possession of by the soldiery, and we were obliged to content ourselves with some bread and beer in a large hall, round the centre table of which sat a number of recruits for the Prussian army, drinking, smoking, and singing. Our entrance was the signal for a burst of delight. 'The English! the English! come to nurse our wounded!' was the cry from all; and directly after, one man gravely advanced from the rest, and begged us to drink their health, which of course we did, and they then sang for us the chorus our entrance had interrupted, and we heard for the first time 'Die Wacht

am Rhein.' It seems they were all *bakers*, part of the reserve called out for service, and their uniforms were rough and ill-fitting, very unlike the smart, well-drilled Prussian soldiers we afterwards encountered. They were stupid, heavy looking fellows, and, in spite of all their singing, certainly much depressed. No wonder. Would our gallant volunteers feel more cheerful if ordered from the office, the workshop, and the farm, to hard and dangerous service? From first to last the greater part of the German soldiery we encountered detested the war, and only longed for peace and home. Bavarians, Hessians, and Prussians proper were divided amongst themselves, yet they fought well. The German army is a splendid machine, but no English soldier would submit to the treatment the German soldiers endure from the sergeants and corporals of their regiments. They are governed by simple brute force, and that, combined with Schnapps and a good dinner, will always

manage the worst of them. Yet it must be confessed that drunkenness is the exception, not the rule. They have enormous appetites, and a great capacity for strong liquors, but they seemed to take both meat and drink in huge quantities with impunity.

At the appointed hour we found ourselves at the train, and were implored to get in, as it was then starting. We remonstrated that the gentlemen had not arrived, and the guard remarked that the train would wait half an hour or so. In time of war it was of no consequence. Having made this comfortable arrangement, we inspected the preparations for receiving the wounded. A staff of Red Cross stretcher-bearers was in attendance to carry them from the train to the carriages, waiting to take them to hospital. After experience convinced us it would be far better to carry the seriously wounded on the stretchers to the hospital, instead of transferring them to a carriage, but it is only

experience that teaches these details. Trays with glasses of raspberry vinegar and water, bread, biscuits, and fruit, were there ready for the refreshment of the sufferers, and kind and active helpers waiting to distribute it all.

The train which brought them came in at last: there were very few, and they were not badly wounded. There had not been time to bring the mass of wounded from the scene of action. We watched the emptying of the carriages. Our gentlemen had arrived, still our train did not move on, and at last we discovered we were waiting for some high official who was to act as convoy of a large sum of money for the army. Apparently it was difficult to get, for two hours elapsed before three or four country carts arrived, and were brought up close to the platform. They were loaded with canvas bags, containing silver coin, which were passed or rather thrown from hand to hand by a line of soldiers to the waggon reserved for them. It seemed a cum-

brous way of sending money, but was probably the easiest distribution in small sums. During this time 'Die Wacht am Rhein' had been again chanted by the warlike bakers, the chorus being led by our German secretary, who had bought 'a book of the words' in town. Doubts as to the neutrality of this proceeding might be suggested, but as he never professed anything but the most intense Germanism, it was not surprising. At last the train moved on. Trèves vanished in the distance. We were fairly started for the Seat of War.

CHAPTER II.

AN EXPRESS TRAIN.

It was 8 o'clock before we reached Saarlouis, a station on the Saarbruck line. The railroad runs through the lovely valley of the Saar, and in the light of an August evening all looked so still and quiet, that war might have been a thousand miles away. The train had come thus far in a jerky and deliberate manner, apparently for no particular reason except the amusement of the guards and stokers. In time of war, a general disorganisation of the details of every-day life takes place, which induces irregularity even where there is no occasion for it; and though it is most earnestly to be hoped that

England will never experience this scourge on her own shores, yet it is a matter of speculation if solid, steady-going English men and women would ever become as 'slip-shod' as the French under the same circumstances. The horrors of war are great: it is one long nightmare of suffering and terror to the miserable inhabitants of the invaded country—one long holiday of recklessness to the conquerors; but its worst feature is, after all, the universal demoralisation to all concerned in it. Peace may be re-established, the invaders may return home in triumph, the suffering people may shake off their sullen despair and set themselves to 'recover' their fallen fortunes; but through long years the evil effects of that demoralisation will be felt on the character of both nations.

We found we should remain some little time at Saarlouis, and whilst walking on the platform several women came up and asked if we were English, and if we had

come to nurse the wounded. They seemed surprised to find us on Prussian ground, as they thought all the English were for the French. So delighted were they with our assurances that we were strictly neutral, that they presented us with bunches of delicate pink oleanders, which we placed in our hats to please them.

It was very late before the train arrived at the long suburb of Saarbruck, St. Johann. We had stopped five or six times for an hour, and were fairly worn out. As it was quite dark, we could see nothing but the lights in the various houses: there was a feverish look about the place, from the fact that every house was lighted at midnight. At last Saarbruck station was reached; but what a scene met us there! The broad platform, which extended to a line on the other side of it, was covered with stalls of provisions lighted by pine torches: the keepers of them, wearied with a long day's work, were sleeping here

and there by the side ; the waiting room was turned into a rough kitchen, and the buildings were much damaged by shells, fired on the celebrated day when the boy, then heir to the Empire of France, received his 'baptism of fire.' No one at that time foresaw by what a baptism of tears it would be followed.

Trains of wounded had been passing all day, another was momentarily expected, and we heard that our convoy would go no farther that night, but might start at any hour in the morning. The best arrangement seemed to be that we should sleep in the carriages, and this was made for us. We then tried to find some supper : here a Mr. Herbert, of the Cologne Ambulance, was of great use to us; he found a stall where we could get some coffee, bread, and oranges, and this was not the last occasion on which his kindness was of essential service. He showed us where a shell had struck the rooms, but the ruin was nothing compared to the accounts we had

read in the newspapers in England, and often since we have read of scenes in which we ourselves took a part, with a sort of puzzled wonder where we could have been not to have seen all this, till we finally decided either that we had no eyes and ears, or newspaper correspondents had sometimes more than the proper allowance, to say nothing of official telegrams and reports, even those of 'the pious King William to his dear Augusta.'

Having finished our exploration, we started for our 'Hôtel du Chemin de Fer,' which we had seen comfortably shunted on to a siding a little way a-head of the station. We blundered over the rails and tried to find a place easy to walk on; and whilst, tired and out of breath with our exertions, we plunged resolutely on, keeping our eyes fixed on the train we had left, we suddenly saw it, to our great dismay, going off at what appeared to be full speed down the line. Now all our

'little baggages' were there, and we commenced the pursuit of our flying hotel in good earnest. Hunting a moveable lodging over the uneven ground of a junction station at one in the morning, with no other prospect of a bed but overtaking it, is not an exhilarating proceeding, and we were very glad to see the hotel stop, and to climb into it, and compose ourselves for the night, having performed our toilette by putting on our wrappers and putting off our boots. Sleeping in a railway carriage as it flies along, with a short halt here and there, and the conviction that one is approaching the desired destination, is even then not a comfortable way of passing the night; but deliberately doing it with the carriage standing still, is more uncomfortable, and none of us felt much refreshed in the morning.

We were fresh from England, and all its profusion of soap and water, and had not got accustomed to sometimes a pint of water

amongst us, and sometimes none at all. Dirt had not become our normal condition, and before we looked out for breakfast we tried to find some dressing room, however rude. Whilst wandering hopelessly about the junction station with its network of lines, we looked up, and on the top of a high green bank, which bounded it, we espied our gentlemen, evidently with water and a towel. We instantly climbed up, cleared the paling, and demanded a share in their luxuries, which further included a pump, with a wooden trough; and after this, feeling greatly the better, we descended again and got some coffee and oranges, after which Louise and myself strolled into the town. We amused ourselves by going shopping, woman's sure comfort, and heard amusing tales of the bombardment from the people.

Nothing very terrible had happened: the station being on the heights opposite the French batteries had suffered most. The

young Frenchwoman who told us this had passed three days in the cellar, for fear of the bomb-shells. She was one of those who had volunteered, with the rest of her townswomen, to nurse the wounded. They were divided into bands, and each took ten days' duty in turns. She had just returned to her shop, but they had not had many gravely wounded in the town. At that time it was too near the frontier, and the men were sent farther into Germany. When we returned to the station we found what may be vaguely called 'a great many trains' going to start. We knew ours by its having a truck attached to it, on which was the omnibus of the Cologne ambulance—a light waggonette for two horses, which would hold six inside, with a cover of tarpaulin. It was an admirable vehicle for the purpose, for at night it was a comfortable bed-room for two or three. We discovered it at last, but quite in a different direction; and after reaching it with much

difficulty, and establishing ourselves for the journey, we were told we must go in another train which had not yet been formed.

We waited about, were sent from one train to another, and at last, utterly worn out, found the one which was finally decided upon by the authorities, and then to our sorrow heard that our kind friends of the Cologne ambulance had had their truck and baggage waggon taken off the train to make way for a carriage for soldiers, and must wait, how long no one knew—not very long after all, as it turned out, for they came on an hour or two later, and we all met at St. Avold, a lonely wayside station, fairly in France. Close by was the battle-field of Forbach, which extended thus far, and traces of the combat were visible as we came along, also of the march of an army, which we learned to track by an unfailing sign—the number of empty bottles.

We passed the station without stopping,

and about a quarter of a mile beyond came to a stand-still, and there we remained till eight in the evening, after nine hours' delay. It must not be imagined this was a passenger train — it was entirely for military purposes, and we travelled in it as part of an Ambulance, and therefore we were independent of time-tables; but even had it not been so, the line was so blocked that it was impossible to stir. Eight trains were on the road before us, in a space of sixteen miles, between St. Avold and Remilly, where the line ended at a distance of only sixteen miles from Metz itself. Remilly was the station to which all the wounded of the three days' battle of Vionville and Gravelotte were brought, and during that day and the next, both of which we spent in our carriage on the line, two thousand waggons of wounded passed us, each containing from six to ten men. This may give a truer idea of the German losses on those days, than the official

telegrams. There were very few French amongst them.

This 19th of August was a very long day. The train might have started at any moment, and we were afraid to go far. We saw on a high road, which traversed the plain at the distance of a mile, a column of troops ; but we could not see the gleam of bayonet or sword, only a bright line of colour above and below, and a few dark spots on either side the column. At last we recognised them—French prisoners—in their red kepis and trousers ; the first but not the last time we saw so sad a sight. It was too far for us to venture, and we contented ourselves with strolling in the fields, and picking up such relics as we could find, principally torn papers.

In the midst of this occupation we heard a shrill whistle, and off went our train. We immediately began to run over the heavy grass land, as if there was a possibility of

catching it, and the proceeding afforded much amusement to the soldiers in the carriages.

Just as we were breathless and despairing we saw a picturesque dragoon officer, in a silver helmet and long white cloak, who was standing on the line, wave his hand to us to stop, and we slackened our pace. When we came up to him he told us the train was only going on a few hundred yards, and we had no chance of reaching Remilly that night. He was one of the finest and handsomest Germans I ever saw, with an Italian complexion and jet black hair, a bright smile and a kindly manner. We were told he was a Stolberg, one of the noble family of that name. When the White Cuirassiers fell so thick and fast at Floing, near Sedan, we may hope he escaped from the massacre; for if he was as good as he was handsome, as the old proverb insinuates, he must have been the enfant gâté of his home.

Another and another long hour passed, and

finding there was no possibility of getting on, we went back to the little station. It was ruined and roofless: shot and shell had fallen round it all the day of the battle; but in one small engine-house a few French prisoners were lying on the ground, too tired and dispirited even to rise from their straw beds. One was from Clermont Ferrand, and spoke sadly of his native village, and the long imprisonment he feared lay before him. Now we wished we had bread, wine, or tobacco to give them; but such things are not included in 'little baggages,' or were not then. We learned wisdom afterwards, and carried about cigars; and no greater comfort could be given to a sick or captive soldier of either nation than those or tobacco.

It was getting late; coffee and oranges had not been a substantial breakfast, and we had not even a morsel of bread—no water, only a little brandy in our flasks. We began to be very hungry, and at last the

General produced a pot of Liebig: a fire was lighted with sticks and dry grass, some ditch-water was procured, and we had a little soup. The soldiery began to light fires by pulling up the stakes and paling which bounded the low wood on our left, and some adventurous spirits started off for a potato field in the distance, and came back with a goodly quantity. We were just watching the boiling of the potatoes, and meditating a friendly exchange of brandy for a few of them, when the whistle sounded again, and the poor fellows had to jump in, leaving their fires, and burning their hands in trying to save their half-boiled potatoes, and we had to go without our dinner.

At Faulquemont we stopped again, and this time for the night. It was too early to sleep, and, indeed, something in the shape of supper was most desirable; but as it was pitch dark, and we could see nothing except some bivouac fires, which were being lighted, it seemed hopeless. At last a young German, who had

travelled in our carriage from Saarbruck, came up to the window, and informed us that he had found a rough auberge in the village, and there was actually 'bifteck.' It was too tempting a prospect; and as he kindly offered to escort us, two of us started off. It was just midnight when we returned to the train, and the scene was most picturesque. Under a group of trees, in a green meadow by the side of the line, bivouac fires had been lighted, and crowds of soldiers were assembled round them, singing in chorus the national airs of Germany; and never again shall we hear 'Vaterland' and 'Die Wacht am Rhein' sung under such effective circumstances, when all around seemed to add reality to the words of the songs; the watch-fires throwing a lurid light on the groups of soldiers—their deep rich voices rising in chorus on the still air of an August night—and the consciousness that we were, in truth, on the battle-fields of this great war. It was early morning before

the singing ceased, and we were left to find what rest we could. But still there were no signs of going on, and the delay was most trying, knowing how much our stores and help were needed at the front. We could get no conveyance of any kind to take us across country, so there was nothing for it but to wait patiently. The General, however, being offered a seat in a private carriage, left his baggage in our charge, and went off straight to head-quarters.

If the detail of our journey to reach the scene of action seem somewhat prolonged, let it be remembered that it is in such simple details that the difference is seen between peace and war; the interruption of all ordinary routine, and the little minor miseries which, in the aggregate, amount to so much; and that this sketch is not only of battle-fields and scenes of trial and excitement, but would aim to show what daily life is in an invaded country.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO CHÂTEAUX.

At the station we heard the sad reason of our delay, which promised to be so long that the General took a light country cart and pushed on to head-quarters at Pont-à-Mousson. As each train ran into the station at Remilly, it was emptied of its load of soldiers and re-filled with the wounded. This necessarily occupied a very long time, and kept the entrance to Remilly blocked with trains. One going back to Saarbruck soon ran into the station of Faulquemont, and the porters divided our train, which was standing there, in two, so that we could cross to the down line and give the poor fellows some bread and water. There

was a little at the station, not much; we gave to all we could, and the carriages, with their burden of suffering, soon went on. We consulted what was best to be done, and an expedition into the village was decided upon, to find provisions. The Secretary went off into a violent state of excitement, declaring that it was the duty of the mayor of the place to provide refreshments for the wounded, and if he did not do his duty, he should be made to do it; and taking the law into his own hands, presented himself (at least so ran his tale) to the astounded official, and ordered him to send bread and brandy to the station.

The effect was certainly the arrival of several women with this assistance. We cut up the bread, and the Secretary procured some buckets of water, into which he poured brandy. It was not a wise thing to do, as it was probable the wounded would prefer pure water, and so it turned out. Another train came in, and we commenced giving the provisions as fast as we could. The poor

fellows were lying on straw, in luggage vans, and one side being left open for air, it was very easy to reach them; but one and all, after a sip of brandy and water, asked for pure water, and we were obliged to empty the buckets and re-fill them from a pump close by. It was hard work carrying the bread and water, and perpetually re-filling the cups of our flasks. The halt was but a short one, and we had to make all the haste we could, while hands were thrust out, and pathetic appeals made to us to be quick and give them some before they were off. All day long this went on at intervals, and what between running with baskets and buckets, and pumping at an impracticable pump, we were fairly worn out, when at five o'clock we started on our way to Remilly. On that day 2,000 waggons passed, averaging 15 wounded in each. It was a very pretty country we ran through, green and pastoral, and showing no signs of war till we reached Herny, a village six miles further on;

and there, in the meadows, on either side the way, was an enormous camp of provisions, guarded by comparatively few soldiers. The King's head-quarters had been there two days before, and we heard their camp was always that space of time in rear of them.

At last, at eight P.M., we reached Remilly, having been just thirty-four hours coming thirty-nine English miles! The platform was crowded with Ambulance-bearers, waiting for the next convoy of country carts bringing wounded, and they were even now coming in; but amidst all the confusion a Prussian aide-de-camp made his way up to our Secretary, who presented him as Baron L——, sent from Pont-à-Mousson to meet us. The Baron took the reins into his own hands, informed the Secretary that from that moment we were under his charge; he had his orders to take us straight to the King, and at ten next morning should be ready to escort us, assuring us at the same

time of a warm welcome at head-quarters. All seemed now satisfactorily arranged, and finding the carts had arrived, and the miserable sufferers were being laid on heaps of straw on the platform, we piled up our little baggages in a corner, gave them into charge, and went to give what aid we could.

For the first time we were in actual contact with the fearful details of the war. Many of the wounds had been but roughly bandaged up. All were needing fresh dressings, from the effect of the jolting over rough roads for eight or ten hours in a burning sun. They were all Germans, and several so fearfully hurt, it seemed impossible to carry them on; yet they were gradually got into the trains, the most seriously wounded into first-class carriages, the rest into the baggage-waggons. Darkness came on, and flaming pitch torches were lighted, and threw a red glare on the scene. Moans of pain, and sudden and sharp cries of agony, added to its fearful effect.

Crimson-stained rags and bits of torn clothing, dirty straw, blankets, caps, and guns, were strewed about, and the heat was stifling, whilst the smoke of the torches choked wounded and assistants alike. It was a relief when the train was off, and whilst waiting for more carts, to go out into the village and try to find a shelter; for our 'Hôtel du Chemin de Fer' had gone back to Saarbruck, and we were literally 'houseless by night.'

But the little town itself presented a sad sight. Close to the station was an open place with trees, and here were many wounded lying on straw, so that we had difficulty in making our way across it. Piteous appeals were made for water and help, and it seemed bad management not to have taken them on to the platform, now nearly cleared of wounded, to wait for the next train. We wandered up a street with a high wall on one side, and seeing an hotel, or rather auberge, I turned into the entrance and civilly asked if rooms were to be

had there. A Prussian soldier instantly seized me by the shoulder and commenced pushing me into the street with considerable violence. A sous-officier, who was passing, asked what he was doing, and reprimanded him severely, explaining to him that it was impossible for strangers to know that the house was taken up for soldiers' quarters; and he also told us so was every inn in the town, and that it was hopeless to search further. We had had nothing since our rough breakfast but a dry crust of rye bread. We had been too busy at Faulquemont to think of our own wants, and the prospect of no bed and no supper was not cheering.

We made our way back to the station amidst groups of noisy soldiers, and found our party assembling and preparing for a similar exploring expedition. It was now pitch dark, and our report was far from encouraging; but some one suggested that the Knights of St. John had always the

best house in town, and probably would give us shelter, and we started for the large château of which they had taken possession. We looked at the long range of windows, and thought that surely some one small room could be spared us, and full of hope, heard the bell ring, saw the door opened, showing a lighted hall, and were informed that we could not lodge there! We might go over the way, where the Protestant Sisters, working with their Order, had a château, and see what they would do for us. We humbly withdrew, and I suggested a bivouac under the rose-bushes in the garden of the inhospitable Hospitallers; at all events it was cool and calm and quiet, away from the glare of the station and the noise in the crowded streets; but as a last resource we did go over the way and found an equally large château, and here were more fortunate. The kindly Sisters had pity upon us and took us all in, gentlemen and all, only regretting they had

nothing but mattresses to offer us, and actually gave us tea, bread and butter, and eggs; and taking us through a room where several severely wounded men were lying, one in the agonies of death, showed us into what in England we should call the back drawing-room. As we could be of no use to the poor fellows next door, we at once took possession of our mattresses, which we thoroughly enjoyed, and slept profoundly. Now as we ran into the Remilly station that evening, not knowing the horrors we should encounter there, we had seen on a high wooded bank on our left a charming white stone château, with gardens and shrubberies coming down to the line, and a summer-house overlooking the country, with Indian chairs and matting, and we had drawn fancy pictures of the family sitting round the table in the long dining-room whose windows we could see, and who, hearing of the arrival of houseless and dinnerless strangers in the town, bound on an errand of

mercy, would send a polite domestic in gorgeous livery to seek for us, with a courteous invitation to become the honoured guests of that White Château; and great was our surprise and amusement the next morning, when, on descending from our room, we wandered into the garden before breakfast, to find ourselves standing close by the Indian summer-house. We were actually the guests of the White Château, though the happy family and the gorgeous footman had faded with the dreams of the night before into empty air.

The château, like so many others we afterwards saw, had been deserted by the happy family of our fancy sketch, and was now occupied as an Ambulance by the Deaconesses. Far better it should be so than be used as soldiers' quarters. It was the great object then and afterwards to turn every good house into an Ambulance where it was possible to do so, and much abuse arose from an unlimited use of the article of the Geneva Con-

vention, which stipulates for the safety of every house in which wounded are nursed. Persons who had neither the means nor the instruction sufficient to support and nurse the wounded, would beg for a wounded man or two as a security, and the result was much neglect from ignorance, and much suffering from want not only of the luxuries, but the necessaries for a sick or wounded man; and it was a wise rule which was afterwards made, that no house should be considered an Ambulance unless it could accommodate six wounded. I myself spoke with an old woman who went to the Prussian commandant du place (town mayor) at Orleans to get a brassard stamped and a safe-conduct for her house as an Ambulance for one man. I asked her what she could give him to eat and drink, to begin with; she said milk, and a little bread. She had nothing but that for herself, but she could not support the hardship of having four German soldiers in her little cottage. I had

much trouble to persuade her it was no use applying for a licence, and I believe I utterly failed in the attempt.

After breakfast we packed up all our little baggage, and waited for our Secretary and the aide-de-camp. He presently arrived, and told us he thought we should do much better to remain there in the château, and establish an Ambulance, than go to head-quarters; and he had told the aide-de-camp so, who had gone off to report it to Prince Pless at Pont-à-Mousson, and that he would make all arrangements with the Deaconesses. Now there were twelve Deaconesses to thirty wounded, and no prospect of more arriving, as all, however badly hurt, were at this time sent on by train. It was a transgression of our positive orders, which left no discretion to us as to our destination; and besides, the Deaconesses did not want us, and plainly said so. Nothing could be kinder or more courteous than they were. If we were resolved to stay, they would do

their best to make us comfortable: give us a wing of the house, the use of all their cooking utensils, anything in their power; but they did not really want or wish for us; and it was an anomalous position for English ladies to be placed in, to force themselves into a house, unasked, and establish themselves there, where they could be of no service, and where even their stores were not required, as the Deaconesses were amply supplied by the Order of St. John. We plainly expressed our opinion, and urged compliance with our written orders. The Secretary excited himself; but firmness won the day, and the arrival of Mr. Herberte, who had reached Remilly with his stores three hours after us, settled the question. He offered to take the ladies on to Pont-à-Mousson in his waggonette, if the gentlemen would follow with the baggage; and it was so arranged, and that we were to start at three o'clock.

This being happily settled, we began to enjoy the beauties of the garden, when a great

noise and bustle suddenly commenced in the street, below the wall which divided the garden from the town. We went directly on to the raised terrace just inside the wall, and saw four soldiers running from all quarters with their arms, and taking up a position opposite the gate. A long road, leading in a straight line to Metz, was visible, and evidently something was expected down this road. On enquiry, we heard there was a sortie from Metz, that the French were coming straight to the village, and the Prussian outposts were already driven in. The Deaconesses were very anxious that a conspicuous Red-Cross flag should be exhibited from the topmost turret, as if the French had artillery, we were in the direct line of fire; though, if the Prussians defended the road, it was difficult to see how, in a military point of view, they could be dislodged by artillery, without the necessity of including the château in the fire of their guns. We were exactly in the position of a bull's eye in a target, and the

Red-Cross flag would have been of very little use. However, the Deaconesses and several of our ladies set to work to make one, which, being extended on the floor of the vestibule, with all the party at work round it in various attitudes, gave the exact effect of a game of 'Hunt the slipper.' All the grand preparations, however, were useless; the report was a false one, and the town settled down into such quietude as a town only sixteen miles from a besieged city, and much closer still to the besieging lines, may be supposed to enjoy.

About three o'clock we were summoned by Mr. Herberte to embark on board his waggonette. The Secretary and surgeon had procured waggons for the baggage, and professed their intention of walking, though why they could not have got a little *charrette* or country cart I do not know. The stores of the Cologne Ambulance and ours were all placed in charge of a troop of cavalry, together with some military stores. Major Siersdorff, the

commander, ordered us all to keep together till we reached Cormy, where we were to rest for the night; but it was already late before, to use a naval phrase, the convoy got under weigh. Our waggonette and the light carriage, with the Major and three other officers, soon outstripped the heavy waggons, and we had perpetually to stop till they came up.

About this period it appears our gentlemen were seized with the brilliant idea of taking a short cut through the woods; and, disregarding the advice of some gentlemen attached to an Italian Ambulance from Turin, which they were on the way to join near Metz, the rash individuals cut themselves sticks, and set out on a walking tour. The result may be easily guessed: we missed each other. Darkness came on, and we were still far from Cormy, but the lights of a large cavalry camp were glimmering in the distance. The Major and Mr. Herberte having consulted together, and finding the baggage waggons still far in the

rear, it was resolved that we should push on as fast as possible to the village close by the camp, where was the Château of Coin-sur-Seille, now occupied by his Excellency General Von der Groeben, as head-quarters of the cavalry division he commanded. We passed the little huts of the camp, roughly made of branches stuck into the ground and interwoven together, for the Germans have no tents; and, turning down a wooded lane, drove into a crowded court-yard, where we halted whilst our kind escort went to ask hospitality for us from the General.

He soon returned with an aide-de-camp, who spoke English perfectly, and told us he had an English wife. He was most courteous; said the General only regretted he had not known of our coming sooner, to prepare some rooms for us; but at this time of night we must content ourselves with such rough accommodation as he could offer us. Thankful even for this, we got out of the carriage, and

were met on the steps of the château by a very gentlemanly officer, who was no less a person than the General himself. He welcomed us with the utmost kindness, and taking a light from the hand of one of the servants, himself preceded us up stairs, showed us into a couple of rooms where we could rest for the night, and withdrew, wishing us good repose. Two elderly females made their appearance; they were old servants of the family who had left the château. They had nothing to offer us, poor things; they had a hard struggle to live themselves; but they got us some hot water, and we made a little soup with Warren's meat biscuits, which refreshed us very much. Louise said she saw at the Remilly station barrels of the same biscuit, for the use of the Prussian army; and though this little book is not like the Christmas pantomimes now-a-days, a vehicle for advertisements, it is but just to say how very good the soup was which they made, and it was fortunate for the Prussians to have a supply of them.

We were up very early the next morning; and, descending into the large old-fashioned kitchen of the château, bribed the servants to give us a little coffee and bread and butter; and whilst thus breakfasting, we heard the history of the château. It belonged to a 'Madame Windle,' an Englishwoman probably, as she had gone to England. The château had been taken possession of and turned into a barrack by the Prussians; but the old ladies both spoke in the highest terms of General Von der Groeben and his considerate kindness. There was no wanton mischief or destruction, only several acts of dishonesty on the part of individual soldiers, such as pocketing rich china cups and small articles for use or ornament, and carrying off saucepans and other cooking utensils; but compared with what we saw and heard afterwards, in other places, the château had a fortunate escape in being occupied by so true a gentleman as his Excellency.

We wandered about the lovely terraced gardens, and gathered handfuls of autumn roses! The pears and grapes were not ripe, nor the peaches and apricots, and if they had been, there would have been none left for us. There were too many troopers lounging about not to have spied out the first ripe fruit and appropriate it, if there had been any. But at the best it is a sad sight to see a splendid home so pulled to pieces; drawing-rooms turned into bed-rooms; the gilded furniture all displaced and strewn about here and there. Too often far worse scenes occur; and it is sadder still to see a cottage home so desecrated, and the savings of a life-time destroyed in an hour.

We left the château about eight o'clock, having thanked the General for his kindness, and Mr. Herberte having told us that his cousin in the Cuirassiers was most anxious to show us their camp, we drove back a few yards, and then walked through the long line

of huts. All looked bright and cheerful in the morning sunlight. Accoutrements were being cleaned ; horses were saddling, and the troopers were preparing to mount when the breakfast in the officers' hut was over. There was no difference in this hut, except that it was larger, and a few mats and rugs were thrown on the straw which formed at once bed and carpet. The huts were arranged in streets as in all camps, and the pathways were kept very clean. The regiment was one of those called the White Cuirassiers. The uniform is the same in all these regiments, a steel breast-plate, a helmet—whose shape is that of the only perfectly graceful helmet I ever saw—white coats and jack-boots. The difference is in the facings : some having blue, some black, brown, yellow, or green.

After this we crossed the road to the Lancers' camp, the other side, and watched the exercises of the cavalry, both light and heavy, for some time, expecting every instant

the arrival of the convoy and the missing gentlemen. Intelligence came at last that they had stopped short of Coin-sur-Seille for the night, and gone on to Cormy by another road, and we started off for the same town, where a road branched off to Pont-à-Mousson. There had been an universal agreement amongst us that stragglers were to rendezvous at Cormy, and we felt assured of meeting our friends and baggage there, and being safely taken on to the head-quarters before night. We should then receive our orders from Prince Pless, the head of the German ambulance department, and know our destition; but our wanderings were not fated to terminate so easily, and Cormy was to be the beginning instead of the end of our troubles. But no omen of evil disturbed us as we drove along the high road from Coin-sur-Seille to Cormy, in the sunshine of that lovely August morning.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MIDNIGHT DRIVE.

The road from Coin-sur-Seille to Cormy was an exceedingly pretty one: trees on each side of it, and a charming view over green fields and patches of wood to a blue distance; and as we drove along, and came suddenly round a corner, a fresh view was disclosed—the houses of a large town and the spire of a splendid cathedral. It looked so cheerful and beautiful, with the quiet fertile country all around; and yet that city was Metz, and the low dull sound we heard now and then the booming of the cannon. We were nearer to the town than the Prussian lines, but the works of defence were hidden by the intervening

country. We looked at it with a strange interest. The siege had at that time hardly begun, and its future fate was all uncertain. M'Mahon and the relieving forces were probably on the march, and no one could foretell the dark tale of treason and shame that will go down with the name of Metz to the latest posterity.

It was noon when we reached Cormy, a town of one long street and one cross street, crowded with men attached to various Ambulances. We halted just through the town, and looked about for our friends and baggage. Nowhere could we see them. Major Siersdorff told us that he had enquired at the quarters of the Knights of St. John, and had orders for us to go on directly to Ste. Marie-aux-Chênes, near Metz, which was full of wounded. This message had been left by the Secretary; but where he was was a mystery; a greater mystery still why he did not wait at Cormy according to agreement, and why he did not

make the slightest effort to find us; for at that very time he was in Cormy, as Louise saw the surgeon (Mr. Parker) at a distance, and wanted to speak to him, but was over-persuaded by the lady who was with her to go on to the house where they had been informed another lady and myself had taken refuge from the confusion in the streets. I had gone to search for our convoy, and meeting a very civil young German gentleman, with the Red-Cross badge on his arm, who directed my companion and myself to the quarters of the Knights of St. John, we had accepted his kind offer to take us to the garden of an hospital, where soup was being boiled, and to give us a basin whilst he sent in search of our companions, who were just at the end of the street.

Louise persisted that she had seen the doctor, and I went back with her to the spot. We found a camp fire, and the gentlemen of the Swiss Ambulance taking a rough dinner

by it. They said our friend had been there, and one of them had met the Secretary only ten minutes before. They were sure he was still in town. Now it was an important point to find him. There were we, with no roof to shelter us, sitting by a road-side, uncertain what to do and where to go; and to add to our troubles, Mr. Herberte got his orders to go to some other villages, and could not take us to Ste. Marie. We had no vehicle, and were certainly in as awkward a predicament as ever English ladies were placed in. A suspicion of unfair play crossed the minds of Louise and myself at that time, and has never since been dissipated. Why was no note left for us? We had only a vague message; and the Secretary, the surgeon, and the valuable stores, had all vanished together.

Now the sympathies of Louise and myself were strongly French; I do not deny it; but that never interfered with our doing all in our power for the German wounded. In

that, at least, we were strictly neutral; and so neutral that the Secretary might have a guess we should object to the entire appropriation of the Society's stores for the benefit of the Knights of St. John or the German use alone. Was this at the bottom of a wish to part the ladies and the stores—in short, to get rid of the female incumbrances, while he clung to the baggage? We shall never know; but there we were; and in a hopeless state I invaded the sanctum of the knights, and requested we might be sent on. We waited awhile, all in vain, still expecting some news. How our heavy waggons got out of town I do not know, unless they went by a cross road, so as to avoid the main street; otherwise we must have seen them.

But at last it was time to depart. Our kind friends of the Cologne Ambulance were off, and we felt very desolate and helpless as we sat on a bench by the road-side to wait for the two rough waggons which were to convey

us. They came at last, and with them a most gentlemanly Knight of St. John to act as our escort, and we started. Perhaps very few English have travelled in those bullock-waggons, with their very long poles and sleepy drivers, who, regardless of any thing except their nap and pipe, and evidently unaccustomed to travel in long strings of vehicles such as crowded all the roads now-a-days, never thought of pulling up when a stop occurred, so that our pole ran with a sudden jerk into the waggon in front, and the waggon behind ran theirs into us, and a sort of electric shock ran all up and down the line; and as this happened on an average every ten minutes, the progress if slow is exciting; but, except for this, the mode of travelling is delightful. Extended on a heap of sweet-smelling hay, wandering slowly through a lovely country, buried in a soft bed, and sheltered from rain by pulling a water-proof sheet over all, and going to sleep under it, it is a dreamy, idle way of

going from place to place, which, if you are not in a hurry, is the perfection of the 'Dolce far niente.'

The waggons were ready; the Knight of St. John mounted in front had confided to our care his elegant court sword, having evidently more confidence in his revolver; we had arranged ourselves comfortably, and were about to start, when an excited individual, also a Knight of St. John, dashed up and ordered us to stop. We humbly asked why, and who he was; and he replied, Major Baron von Zedlitz. Now I had been warned before I left London, if I did encounter such an individual, to keep clear of him. He had nothing to do with us. We were to obey Prince Pless, and no one else; and I remarked that we were going to Ste. Marie-aux-Chênes, and that, as we were late, I should be obliged by his not detaining us. On this he grew furious, and declared we were to stay in Cormy. There were so many wounded there, we must remain to

nurse them; and he would give us a house and send for our baggage; but stay we should. I declined positively to do so, and he used what I believe might be very bad language, veiled in guttural German; at least it sounded like it, and we thought so, because he added directly afterwards, 'If you were in a drawing-room I should not speak so to you.' To this I answered, 'A lady is a lady in a hay-waggon as well as a drawing-room; you ought to remember that.' He then said the English Society had sent us. I said 'Yes,' and their orders we were bound to obey. His reply was not very apropos: 'That he cared nothing for the Prince of Wales.' This must have been such a dreadful loss to his royal highness that we laughed outright, and our Chevalier requested the Baron to 'go away'—a mild translation, but expressing the sense of what he said; and as the bullocks took it into their heads to go on, we did go on, and left our friend gesticulating in the street.

It was two o'clock when we left Cormy, and a seven hours' journey before us; and just as we got out of the town, and down a steep bank, which would have been the ruin of a respectable carriage, we met a troop of dragoons. The officer stopped us, asked if we were the English ladies, and said an express had been sent to Remilly to bring us to head-quarters. Prince Pless was very angry that we had not come on with the aide-de-camp, as arranged on our first arrival We said we must go on to Ste. Marie now as our stores and baggage were there, but we would tell the Secretary. I must here remark that our surgeon, Mr. Parker, had gone on with him, on the faith that a gentleman to whom the Secretary spoke was Prince Pless. The description did not accord with the personal appearance of the Prince, as we saw him afterwards at Versailles; nor is it clear why the Prince should send a messenger from Pont-à-Mousson to bring us on there, and

then give orders in Cormy that we should go to Ste. Marie; and why he did not give them some written order? We were thoroughly puzzled; and as Louise and I sat nestling in the hay, discussing the matter with profound gravity, we must have reminded any looker-on of the original owls in an ivy bush. Our sagacious discourse was cut short by a worse jerk than usual, and we saw we were by the bank of a river, across which was thrown a temporary bridge for exit from the town, while the real bridge was reserved for the passage of the carts of wounded which still came on in endless stream from the neighbourhood of the battle-fields.

Had we been five minutes sooner we could have crossed, but a German regiment was just ahead of us; after them came all their provision waggons, and they were followed by a pontoon train, the massive iron boats placed on very heavy broad-wheeled trucks, which tried the strength of the bridge. It bore

very well, except that every now and then some plank had to be replaced. But it was just at the other end, where the bank of soft sand rose steeply, that all the troubles occurred. The only chance of getting up it was lashing the horses into a gallop, and this only succeeded half way, for the wheels of the heavy trucks invariably sank so deep into the sand that other horses had to be attached in front, and the wheels dug out; and when this was done, and the waggon safely landed on the road the bank had to be re-made, and so on for about twenty waggons. Two whole hours we waited in despair, watching the proceeding, and thinking how much more simple it would have been to have sent the pontoon trains by the old bridge, and the lighter carts by the new; but the order had been given, and it would have required an application to at least three departments, and three dozen officers, a quire of paper, and a couple of secretaries, to have diverted the course of one

waggon. There never were such a people for pens and ink and forms to fill in as the Prussians. Our Circumlocution Office is nothing to it.

But at last we started, and got fairly over the bridge and into the long line of waggons going up one way and coming down the other. It seemed as hopeless as ever; but our gallant Knight aroused himself, called to a dragoon, and we were allowed to break the line and go on. We saw a refractory waggon and driver fairly hunted off the road, down the bank, and into the meadow below. It seemed impossible for it not to go over, but it escaped. At last we came where the waggons were three abreast, and a carriage containing a wounded officer of rank was trying to pass down the road. One resource remained for us, if we would not pass hours in the block, and it was had recourse to. The dragoon, brandishing his drawn sword and shouting fearfully, dashed down the bank

and into the field; our driver stood up and urged on his quiet beasts, and to my horror I found we were going after the dragoon. What a jolting and bumping it was! But the waggon was evidently built on the principle of never losing its equilibrium, and as for the harness breaking, it could not well do that, for the ropes of which it was composed were so loose that the wonder was how the bullocks kept in them, and why they did not catch their feet in the traces which dangled about. Over the meadow we went, till we had headed the line and regained the road. The Knight wrapped himself up in his cloak, and lighted his cigar. We dug a hole in the hay, in which we could keep ourselves warm (for the sun was setting and the evening was damp and chill), and composed ourselves to sleep. Weary hours passed away, and still the bullocks jogged on. Three times we went the wrong road, and had to retrace our steps. We passed through

the town of Ars-sur-Moselle, with its Roman ruin. Night set in, and there we were, between Metz and the Prussian lines, and our destination apparently as far off as ever. We slept and woke, and slept again; we got cold and cramped; and where we were no one knew, not the Knight or the drivers.

Except our two waggons, not a vehicle was to be seen, and the villages were deserted. At last we emerged on a level space of country. It lay white and bare in the darkness, and a fearful smell compelled us to keep our handkerchiefs close to our faces, and even then it produced a feeling of sickness. The Knight flung away the red end of his last cigar, and turning round, told us this was the battle-field. We could see nothing but the outline of a vast space, over which we had to pass. The sad details were hidden in the darkness, and we went slowly on till we entered a ruined village, and halted before an almost roofless house,

where lights were still gleaming, though a hot steam on the windows hid the occupants. The door opened, and a gentleman came out, his stained apron showing too plainly what had been his occupation. He told us the village was Gravelotte, Ste. Marie was a mile further on, and prayed for bread and wine for his wounded. We had none to give. The Knight promised to send some back from their stores at Ste. Marie, and we started again. Just beyond and behind the village the hottest fight had been, and the dead had been hastily buried by a hillock between Gravelotte and Ste. Marie, but indeed for miles the whole battle-field was scarred with a thousand graves; not single tombs, but trenches, in which the dead were piled, with a rough wooden cross above them, to point out the place. Catholic and Protestant alike seem to have accepted that holy sign as the most fitting to mark where the soldiers of both nations and all faiths were buried side by side on the

field where they fell. Just afterwards we passed a number of blazing watchfires. They were the outposts of the army of Prince Frederick Charles.

In half an hour more we halted again at the entrance of a village. A German sentinel told us it was Ste. Marie, and now *where* our Secretary and the baggage were was the question. We wandered slowly on through the long street, not meeting a living soul, till we found ourselves at the other extreme end of the village. Here a countryman appeared, who suggested that probably the strangers were at a 'château' which he pointed out, down a very muddy lane. The Knight proposed that before we ventured down it on what might be a useless search he should go and enquire, unless we were afraid to be left; but really we saw no cause for fear in the street of a village, however deserted; and he was about to start when we heard a call, and saw our absconded friends running up the

street, professing their great astonishment at seeing us, their wonder at how they could have missed us, and the agonies of mind they had gone through on our account." Where we were to sleep was the question, and the night being far advanced, it was indeed a serious question. The Knight most courteously suggested that at all events the quarters of the Knights of St. John would doubtless afford us shelter ; and there we repaired, and were received by what we might irreverently describe as an elderly party, the very type of a lodging-house keeper; but who, we were informed, was a Mrs. Seeman, who had come from Dresden, with some Alexandrine Sisters, to assist the knights in their care of the wounded.

We were shown into a most comfortable room, with handsome mahogany bedsteads, feather beds, pillows, and clean sheets. We had not undressed since we left England, nine days before, and the prospect was most inviting. There were two or three Knights

there, distinguished by the white enamel cross suspended round the neck, and a young esquire. They regretted that they had but little to offer us, but to that we were welcome; and we gratefully accepted some very weak tea and some slices of rye bread. We wondered what was to become of us. Would the Knights vacate their comfortable beds, and sleep in their cloaks in some other apartment, or were there other apartments as luxuriously furnished; for, in spite of the stores piled about the room, it was comparative luxury. At last Madame S—— rose, and said two of the ladies must sleep in the house where the Knights dined, and the others in this house. We waited till she returned from disposing of them for the night, and she then showed us into a sort of closet, in which was a bed; and how thankful we were to creep into it, even hungry as we were, and to enjoy our first good night's rest! I do not think we should

have gone off to sleep so contentedly had we known, as we did afterwards, that the Knights of St. John sat down to a good hot supper, with pale ale and wine. But how they do their work will be seen as we go on. It was enough for us to have tea and bread and a bed; and had our privations been unavoidable, we should have been rather glad of them than otherwise; but it was not so, and Mr. Parker often said afterwards he felt ashamed to sit down and sup with them, knowing how little we had had.

It was well he did. It was his last chance for some days, and hard and trying work lay before him; and often we stinted ourselves to leave a larger portion for one, who, we knew, must require it more than we did; so it was well that he enjoyed a good supper. The name of our kind and courteous escort we never knew; but if ever this book should meet his eye, we beg here to thank him for the trouble he took, and the long journey he

underwent, in fulfilment of his knightly duty of guarding unprotected females over a lonely country, and past the outposts of the besieging and defending forces, where, certainly, it was wholly unfitting for them to venture alone. But our venturous journey was safely ended under his care, and we were ready to commence our duties with the coming day.

CHAPTER V.

THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN.

THE morning of the 23rd of August opened with a down-pour of rain, which continued all day. Under such circumstances no lonely village like Ste. Marie could have looked gay; but the brightest sunshine would have failed to give an air of cheerfulness to a place so ruined, so desolate, so full of pain and sorrow. It might have been truly said of it that day, 'There was not a house where there was not one dead.' The battles of the 16th, 17th, and 18th, had extended over many miles of country, on which stood several villages, amongst them St. Privat, Vionville, Gravelotte, Briey, and Ste. Marie; and the wounded,

who could not be carried to the rear, were dispersed amongst these villages. The inhabitants had mostly fled from them. Shot and shell had done their work of destruction. All the habitable houses were occupied as Ambulances, whilst the churches were also crowded. The miseries endured by the poor fellows, laid down to suffer and die in the first shelter that could be found—their greatest luxury a heap of straw—must be seen to be understood. Too often overlooked in out-of-the-way barns and stables, they long in vain for even bread or water; and death on the battle-field is a happy alternative from such prolonged agony.

It was now our duty to go amidst these scenes of horror, and we prepared ourselves, ready for the arrival of the surgeon-in-chief, who was to allot to us our share in the work. But first some sort of breakfast was desirable, and Mrs. Seeman informed us we should have some bread and coffee when the Knights had

finished their repast, and we had ground a certain quantity of coffee-beans. The oldest and crankiest of coffee-mills was produced. We set to work—one of the ladies really was most indefatigable—but imagine our disgust when we found we were grinding for the Knights! We abandoned the coffee-mill, and adjourned to the other house, to wait for what might come. Coffee and rye bread came at last. I suppose the Knights had eaten all the butter and eggs, for we only saw the shells; and when we returned to the quarters we were shown into an airy loft, without a single article of furniture in it, and informed this was our bed-room, and the gentlemen and the stores were to be stowed in the entrance, which was part of the loft, divided from it by a partition of planks. The windows were all broken, and the shutters hung loose on their hinges. It was lucky it was August. We thought that probably they would find us two or three mattresses, and a table, and a couple of

chairs, so that we should be pretty comfortable. As for a toilette apparatus, we had been told that morning that there was no water, except for the wounded and for cooking, so that was evidently a superfluity. Water was doubtless very scarce. The streams and wells were tainted with blood. It was only what was in the cisterns that was available. We had grown very immoral by this time, and regarded the theft of a couple of pints of water as a venial sin, and with this we all made our toilette. It was the greatest hardship of all, and we resolved that, come what might, water we would find, even if the Knights had to grow their beards, and do without the cans of shaving-water we saw carried into their room.

This, however, is a digression. To return to the later events of the day. The surgeon-in-chief came at last, paid us a great many pretty compliments, sent one surgeon to the church with one of the ladies, allotted to

another a house in which were all the worst cases of gangrene, to Louise several stables full of wounded, to myself a house with about fifty. Surgeons and orderlies were very scarce. There was not a Sister of Mercy there, and the Alexandrine Sisters remained in the quarters to see to the cookery, and assist Mrs. Seeman. The dinners were to be given out at noon. Our first task was to wash the men as much as possible—a great difficulty with little water, no soap, and no sponges. Charpie, however, answered as well; and when their dirty stocks were taken off, and as much of their blood-stained clothes as possible, we commenced to dress the wounds of all, except those whom the surgeons themselves attended to. In Louise's case she could not undress her poor men. They had only straw, and were obliged to keep on their coats. Nothing is so bad for them as this. The dust and blood, the sensation of dirt, is quite enough to make them feverish. The

lady who had the church worked very hard; she put it into splendid order in twenty-four hours; but though the storehouse of the Knights was full of goods, there was immense difficulty in getting anything.

Many of the men were so desperately wounded it was useless to do anything but give them a little water. One man in my house laid grovelling on the floor; he would not keep on his mattress, and tore off even the blanket, his sole covering; he had been shot in the head, and how he had survived was a marvel. His awful appearance, as he rose and staggered about the room, with the blood streaming down, was too much for the nerves of the wounded soldiers. The German orderlies tried to keep him quiet; all in vain; and to finish his sad story, I applied to the surgeon to have him placed somewhere alone. It was twenty-four hours before it was done; and during the night he rose, and trying to get out, nearly fell upon a poor Frenchman,

the back part of whose right shoulder had been entirely carried away by a piece of shell. He shrieked with terror, and the orderlies declared that, order or no order, the miserable man must be changed, and he was finally taken down into the loose box of a stable below, where next day he died.

The hay-loft over this stable was the operation room, to which patients were brought from the smaller houses, and here the surgeons worked for hours at their sad task. About noon the soup came, no meat, only a morsel of bread, and having seen the dinner finished, I was going up the street to get mine, when I met Louise coming out of her stables. She asked me what time the patients were to have their soup. I said dinner was over, and on going to the quarters she discovered that her men had been quite forgotten. This rectified, we went into the 'other house,' and found some soup, a very small piece of boiled bacon, and no vegetables.

On this we dined, and went back to our work, which was more to watch the men, give them water, and change such dressings as required replacing, than the active work of the morning. No wine was allowed to the French, and no cigars. The Germans had both, and the stores were full of wine and tobacco, so the want of them could not be the excuse. I applied to Mrs. Seeman for a bottle, and with some grumbling she gave me one. Louise also got some, and we gave it equally to both. Nothing can be kinder or more good-natured than German Infirmiers to friend and foe alike, and when I left the bottle at night I found in the morning they had given it, as I had done, to both. It was but a little each man required, just to flavour and colour the water.

The rain continued as hard as ever, and as I went home to see how our bed-room was furnished, I found exactly what I had left—nothing. I sent for some straw. The German

orderly who acted as servant instantly sent half-a-dozen soldiers with a shock a-piece, and half-a-dozen more after them. Louise and I then divided the straw, and laid our water-proof sheet over our heap, and seeing a large chest of 'spongio piline,' one of those useless things sent out by the committee, we covered the sheet with the squares of spongio, and finding some sheets in a box, which said sheets were utterly useless at present in the stables, we laid them over it, and so constructed a bed that was at least clean, if not very soft. We then turned another chest of spongio on end, hung a railroad rug gracefully over it, and adorned it with our dressing things and several small books. We also got a card-board box of quinine powders, covered that with a small white cloth, stood up a round hand-glass upon it against the wall, and flattered ourselves that we had a toilette table of decided elegant appearance. Another box served as a table, chairs we had none,

and the loft might have been called chilly on this rainy evening, even though it was August; but our work kept us warm. We then adjourned to the entrance, and in a fit of excessive charity set to work at the Surgeon's bed, which was piled up in a recess, and so scientifically did we arrange it, that the unfortunate young man slept, or rather did not sleep, at an angle of forty-five, and passed the night slipping out at what might be called the foot of the bed, only stopped in his career into the centre of the room by the heavy boxes of waterproof sheeting which we had placed at the end of the straw heap to keep him warm and comfortable. His good temper and gaiety were proof even against this trial, and next morning he thanked us for our efforts, but said, if it made no difference to us, he preferred to lie with his head a little lower.

Supper at seven concluded the day, soup and very little bouillon, and one bottle of very sour wine. We were not epicures, yet

we should have enjoyed a small piece of the chickens in white sauce, and the roast potatoes, and a glass of the port wine or pale ale that we saw go in to the Knights, who dined before us. Alas! bones, and empty bottles were our share of the gorgeous banquet! If we had only been allowed to dine before them, it would have been better; but as it was, we always saw the 'leavings' and never had any! They went to Frau Seeman. We were very hungry, and that is the honest truth. We had no store of food or wine, and we could not make an indigestible meal of gutta percha tissue, lint, and bandages. Quinine powders were the only things that we could have had; and under the circumstances, and considering the appetite they stimulate, it was not advisable to dose ourselves with them. If really there had been nothing to eat, we should have been quite contented. In our first enthusiasm, as I have said, luxuries and comforts were distasteful to us; but we were

hungry and there were eatables, but none for us, and we went hungry to bed and were famished in the morning.

Breakfast was as scanty as ever, and just as it was over we heard the Secretary say something which betrayed his intention of leaving Ste. Marie that day. We instantly asked him where he was going, and he said to England; his task of bringing us out was accomplished, and he should start in an hour. We requested him to take some letters for us, and he got very excited, and declared we ought to have no time to write, even to our relations, if we did our work properly. We could just send a Feld-Post card, but write we could not and should not. Louise most wisely assented to every word he said, fully intending to write a budget all the time by the first opportunity, and not having any intention of confiding her letters to his care; but I incautiously said, 'I have promised Captain Burgess, the Secretary of the Com-

mittee, to write to him as soon as we arrived at head-quarters, and though we were not there, I should write and say where we were.' He got more excited than ever; perhaps he was afraid we should write letters for the papers. Now this I had, at the request of the Committee, promised not to do myself, and to express this their urgent desire and positive order to the other ladies. I can safely say I never transgressed it, though I was offered a handsome remuneration, neither did Louise. I have reason to believe it was disobeyed by one of the party, but it was unknown and unsanctioned by me. However this might be, to our writing the Secretary decidedly objected, and went off suddenly without any letters from anyone in his charge.

As for the Feld-Post cards, they, at that time, only passed in the German lines, and our English friends would not have been the wiser for any information sent upon them. I think later in the war they did go to England,

but of this I am not sure; and before leaving the subject of posts I may remark that the uncertainty of the Feld-Post made it a sort of lottery as to whether any letters would ever reach. Sometimes they did, sometimes not; but we never got a newspaper by it, though German papers came safely to their destination. Had we got one now and then, we should have thought that they were stopped on account of their contents; but as it was, I fancy the weight of newspapers caused a general order to bring no foreign ones, the letter carts for cross country work, being light and small. After breakfast we went to our duty. In the light of a sunny morning, St. Marie looked sadder than ever, with its roofless houses, and the dirt and disorder of its only street. There were heaps of shakos, shoes, belts, tins, pots, cartouche boxes, pieces of bomb shell, and, worst of all, rags, bandages, and charpie thrown out of the windows, and bearing evidence of their having been but lately used.

Not a woman or child was to be seen; a few were crouching in their ruined houses, but not daring to venture out, and every sign of trade or business had vanished. Even the conquering army had passed on, and only a small guard of soldiers was quartered there.

I found one of my wounded soldiers dying, a young Bavarian, and all he longed for was a little beer. How I had seen dozens of pale ale, unpacked, in the Knights' quarters. I saw hampers of 'Bass' in the storehouses, addressed for the use of the sick and wounded, and I went back directly to Mrs. Seeman, who officiated as store-keeper, and asked for a bottle. I was told there was none. I said there was; I had seen it; but the answer was it was for the use of the Knights. I begged in vain, and resolved to wait the return of some one of them to ask for a little.

I went upstairs, and whilst there two entered the house, accompanied by several German army surgeons, and, coming into the

outer room of the loft, requested me to open the stores, that they might select what they wanted, as they were going back to the camp. I told them the stores were in charge of the Surgeon. He was at his duties; they must return later. They declined to go without the stores, and I sent for Mr. Parker, remaining myself on the watch. When he came, they wanted almost everything; but, with great tact, he contrived to get off by giving a quarter of what they wanted, and some of the very instruments they took we saw, five months afterwards, unused, to be taken home to Berlin, for service in their private practice there. Surely Army surgeons (I call all Army surgeons who were serving with the troops) should be supplied with instruments at the expense of their own Government, not at the cost of private subscribers to a charitable fund.

After they were courteously bowed off, the Surgeon and myself agreed we would hide all

the small and valuable things under the straw of our bed in the inner room; we dragged in cases of valuable waterproof sheetings and gutta percha tissue, and buried quinine powders, boxes of oiled silk, and various other articles in the straw. I forgot to mention this to Louise, who passed an uncomfortable night, and the next morning complained how very 'knobby' the straw was; she was prepared to find it prickly, but not angular.

When we had finished hiding the valuable stores, I went down and again begged for some beer. Frau Seeman refused to give me anything, except a bottle of syrup to make some lemonade. With this I returned to my hospital, but the poor fellow was disappointed at not obtaining what he longed for, and in half an hour afterwards died. The morning duty being over; I returned back to quarters, and watched the Knights of St. John packing up four or five waggons of stores, to be sent back to Pont-à-Mousson, then the central

depôt, and resolved that, if they had such a superabundance, they should have none of ours.

After our early dinner Louise and I went our rounds to see that our patients had their dinners, and then resolved to walk just down the street and out of the village, where we could see over a great part of the battle-field. We went through the garden at the back of the house and found ourselves at once upon it, for Ste. Marie had been in the centre of the fight. For several miles the country all around was a barren level plain, on which there grew no single blade of grass. It had been corn and potato fields, divided by low hedges, but now the ground was as hard and bare as the Mall in Saint James's Park; but, unlike that, not a tree, not a shrub. Scattered over it were torn bits of clothing, helmets, swords, guns, tin pots, knives, knapsacks, combs, brushes, bottles, and odds and ends of all sorts here and there. Dark stains

showed where some dead or wounded man had fallen; in one place was a huge heap of shakos and belts, guarded by a sentinel, and at intervals mounds of fresh earth showed where the dead were buried.

Nothing could be more depressing than the view over this dry, dusty plain, with a leaden sky lowering above and a chill wind whistling by. A great number of letters, papers, leaves of books, and cards were strewed about. I picked up some, and it was very sad to read the loving words from home, and to think of the hopes all mouldering under those mounds of earth. I will give an extract from one which contained no address, and was simply signed 'Nathalie.'

'Chaire peti ami (cher petit ami) . . . I thank thee that thou hast sent me thy portrait; when I look at it, it seems as if I saw thee thyself. Alas, how happy I should be, if it would speak to me! Dear friend, I know it is impossible; but after all I wager there

will come a happy day when I shall see thee thyself, and thou will never know how happy thy portrait made me. Dear friend, thou askest was I grieved to see thee depart? I was, indeed, though I did not say so, that I might not vex thy mother, who weeps for thee every day. Charles has left. I gave him thy address; he will tell thee all the news. Eugénie comes not to see me as often as she did. . . . Thou askest me why Stephen, who loves Honorine, does not marry her. I know nothing; they do not tell me. She told him he did not go to see her often enough; only upon a Sunday. Alas, dear friend, she is more greedy than I, who should be happy if I saw thee every Sunday, or even once a month. . . . Thou askest me did I dance on the feast day of St. Eustache; no, I did not dance. Thou must have been there; I had not spirit to dance and thou not there with me. If I went there at all, it was because I thought I ought not to do wrong,

and vex my father and mother. Nevertheless, I did not know, dear friend, it would have displeased thee; but without that, thou seest, it gave me no pleasure. Émile has the umbrella thou didst leave in the little cottage. . . . Paul sends his compliments, and embraces thee with all his heart, so do my father and mother. As for thy little friend, she too embraces thee with all her heart, praying thee not to forget her who loves thee, and will love thee for ever.

'NATHALIE.

'P.S.—To-day is the first of the season for the chase. Thy brother has killed one hare, and Louis Michelli two.

'August 29, 1869.'

There were other letters written by the same loving hand, all dated the same year, and now stained with blood, and trampled under foot in the mud, lying close by a square of newly-turned earth, the grave of some

twenty French soldiers. Poor Nathalie; her letters were carried to the last battle-field of her 'cher petit ami,' and the happy day never came when he went back to dance with his true-hearted love at the feast of St. Eustache. Louise and I wandered for a short time over this melancholy plain, and then returned by the road, with the stumps of what had once been the poplar trees, which border all those long, straight roads of France, on each side of us, and went to our various duties, till it began to grow dusk, the wounded were dozing away the weary hours, and we went back to our quarters.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESCUE.

After our return, and whilst standing over the kitchen fire, in hopes of being requested to take a cup of the coffee which was boiling, we heard a voice asking, in German, if the good people would boil some eggs for him. The accent was most welcome to our ears—it was English—and turning round I saw a gentleman in a white cap and an English grey tweed coat. I instantly said, 'Are you not from England?' and the answer was, 'Good gracious, are you the English column?' 'Yes,' I said; and before I had time to explain he rushed into the street, shouting 'Here they are!' Louise and I naturally rushed after him, and

there, in the middle of the dirty street, stood 'the General,' who commenced a series of the profoundest bows, whilst our friend in the white cap, name then unknown, expressed his delight at having found us. They had been sent from Pont-à-Mousson to look for us, after the return of the messenger who had gone to Remilly with the news that we had left, and no one knew where we were. The said messenger, an English naval officer, had accompanied the other two on the chase, and they had caught an aged Knight of St. John to act as their escort, whose cross was a safe conduct everywhere, and who wanted to get to Bar-le-Duc, and, being utterly ignorant of geography, was being dragged about the country in the most opposite directions.

This elderly individual had retired to rest somewhere, his usual employment, and our three friends were looking out for dinner and shelter. We offered them such hospitality as we could. Mr. Parker begged a loaf of bread;

Louise and I procured some hot water. We produced the cups of our flasks and our clasp knives, turned a box of stores on end, put a candle into an empty wine bottle, and prepared for the gorgeous banquet. Whilst I mixed Liebig with the water, Louise stormed the kitchen fire, stole some coffee, and boiled the eggs they had brought, and the gallant General, the naval officer, and the kind-hearted M.P. in the white cap assembled round the festive board, when the M.P. suddenly remembered himself of two Swiss surgeons they had picked up on the way, who had only been offered by the housekeeper, Mrs. Seeman, some soup, as they said, made of dirty water, and nothing else. A shout into the street brought them up to join the party, and we passed round the cups and one glass; they eat Liebig, and eggs, and bread, and enjoyed themselves. Now both Louise and myself persisted in calling the General 'Mr. Henry,' having been informed by the Secretary that it was neces-

sary to do so, as he was strictly incognito, he having property in France, which would be forfeit were it known that he was with the German armies; but hearing Mr. W—— (the M.P.) and Mr. A—— (the lieutenant) address him by his name, we asked if it was really necessary to alter his army rank. He laughed heartily and said, 'Yes, and he was much obliged to us for promoting him. The General told us that at the head-quarters they had been uncomfortable about us, and Mr. A—— had been despatched in search of us; that on his return they were requested to hunt us up, which they had been doing in every village between Pont-à-Mousson and Ste. Marie, and on every part of the battle-fields.

There was some political reason, it was believed, why the Secretary carefully avoided head-quarters, and the General had been placed in charge of us and the stores, and was to take us straight to the King. The army was moving on to Chalons, and we must follow it directly.

As for property in France, he had not an acre. We were honestly delighted; not that we wished to leave our work at Ste. Marie, but we had lost all confidence in our leader, and Louise and myself much preferred being under the command of an English officer with a name known and honoured. No Belgravian saloon was more cheerful than the attic of the Knights' house that afternoon. What did broken windows and medicine chests for chairs matter? Turtle soup and salmon have been served up to *blasé* Londoners, and been less enjoyed than Liebig's soup in cups of flasks and slices of dry bread. Cigars were lighted, affairs medical and military discussed, till darkness closed in, and we actually lighted a second candle, and chatted on till supper-time. We then all adjourned together to the other house.

A judicious enumeration of the titles and orders of the General and a description of the wonderful influence exercised over the British

35573

Government by the illustrious senator induced Frau Seeman to increase the quantity of bouillon, and even to add some cold bacon. The Admiral (we promoted him too for the benefit of Frau Seeman) brought out two bottles of wine, and we supped and sat over it so long that we were fairly turned out by Frau Seeman, whose very comfortable bed-room we were occupying; and as their ideas of bed-rooms and sitting-rooms seemed somewhat confused, and the lady showed evident symptoms of taking off her cap, we thought it better to adjourn at once, especially as only the evening before, whilst sitting in the Knights' room, having been invited to take a cup of tea with the Frau, we had been astounded by the apparition of a Knight in a blanket, reminding me exactly of an illustration in an edition of 'Don Quixote,' whose pictures were the delight of my childhood, and who coolly proceeded to get into bed, and request that a cup, *a large one*, of the hottest tea might be immediately administered to him,

as he had been taking a bath, and feared to catch cold. Of course it rained very heavily as we went back. · Not a light was to be seen, and we slipped about in the mud in a very uncomfortable way.

The Admiral and Mr. W—— had found a room and a mattress. The General shared Mr. Parker's heap of straw, and in spite of the assurance of Frau Seeman that at half-past twelve precisely the French would make a great sortie from Metz, taking Ste. Marie-aux-Chênes on their way to somewhere, we retired to our own straw and a dreamless sleep. Not a gun boomed from the lines of either army, there was neither dog nor cat in the village to disturb us with their howls, the very mice were starved out and had forsaken the garret, there was no excuse for lying awake, and the sun shone in through the holes in the roof before we were roused from our rest. After coffee the General walked with me to the hospital, and said that he had decided on

our leaving for Pont-à-Mousson that day, so as to arrive in time for dinner ; that he would require waggons to convey us and the stores, under escort of the Surgeon, whilst he and his friends went on to procure quarters for us. Dinner would be at seven o'clock, they would meet us in the Grande Place, and show us our lodgings. The King would be gone on, and we should have to follow him till we overtook him; and he begged me to inform the other ladies that all were to be ready at noon.

He went into the house with me, and took the kindest interest in the poor fellows, especially the few French who were there. 'Wounded' is a claim on the sympathy of everyone; but wounded and a prisoner is a stronger one still ; and so he felt it, as we did afterwards through many a long, sad day. And what a contrast was his tall, upright figure, his clear eye and firm step, to the poor crushed forms lying there. As he strode across the room, one Frenchman, looking at him with sad eyes

of envy at that health and strength, said to me with a sigh, 'Monsieur marche fort;' adding, 'Shall I ever be able to go home, do you think?' The gift of a few cigars brightened up many a pale face. He had served with the French armies, he could talk to them of their regiments and their old officers, and his presence was like a gleam of sunshine lighting up the weary hours.

After he left the hospital, I took leave of the poor fellows, and then went to the church to summon the ladies there. It was also requisite to find the Curé to administer the last sacraments to a dying man, and I hoped to meet him, supposing Mass would not be over. I entered the church and found the ladies, but no Curé. I asked if he had been there. They said No; there had been no service that morning. I was very much surprised, for that of the morning before was a most touching sight. The church was not very large and had no aisles; the wounded were ranged on mattresses

in a double row down the sides, leaving the path up the centre clear, except for two or three tables, on which were the necessaries of the surgeons and nurses. The space within the Altar rails had been carefully kept free from all intrusion, and Mass had been celebrated every morning at eight.

The greater part of the wounded were Catholics, and the rest lay quiet and listened and looked with interest at the priest. The irreverence of the Infirmiers, who were German, and the surgeons and their attendants, even at the most holy moment of the service, could not destroy the solemn effect; and when the priest raised the Host, in which the humble, undoubting faith of the poor soldiers saw their uplifted Saviour present amongst them, and turned painfully on their blood-stained beds to worship and adore, it must have been a cold and stony Protestant heart that did not feel how glorious was the faith that could thus realise amidst such agony the Redeemer close

at hand, to forgive and bless and receive the freed spirit to a home where 'there is no complaining and no leading into captivity in the streets.' I regretted the omission of the daily service, and having announced our departure for noon precisely, I went to the Curé's house. I found him just returned from a village about two miles off, where he had walked to celebrate his daily Mass. I asked why he had gone so far with his own church close at hand, and the answer was, 'Madame, I had not a drop of wine to consecrate.' 'Why did you not go to the stores?' 'Madame, I did, but they refused me. I asked only for this little quantity (showing me a medicine phial), but they would not give it me.' I thought of the half-dozen emptied bottles I had seen on the Knights' dining table, and I did not envy the frame of mind that could thus deprive the sufferers of their greatest and holiest consolation. The contents of a couple of flasks supplied immediate wants for a day

or two, and I tried my powers of persuasion on Frau Seeman for a bottle of even vin ordinaire; but I shared the fate of the Curé, and retreated upstairs, metaphorically speaking, shaking the dust off my feet as I went, and wondering what good the Knights of St. John and their stores were to anybody or anything.

I found Louise and the surgeon packing up all the stores and nailing them down, in expectation of a visit from a number of army surgeons, coming to get all they could, not for Ambulance, but regimental use. A sudden exclamation of Louise's from the inner room showed she had discovered the reason of the angular points and hard knobs in the straw, from out of which she was digging all sorts of small boxes and packages, finishing by the discovery of a roll of waterproof sheeting, fifty yards long, under her pillow, and acting as a bolster, upon which she remarked, in a reproachful tone, 'Now, how could we be expected to sleep with a roll like that under

one's head?' to which there was one unanswerable rejoinder: 'But we did!' A clatter of swords and spurs up the ricketty stairs announced the arrival of the German surgeons, and in they came. From all the villages, from the camp, every brigade had sent by deputation for everything there was and was not, and at that very time three waggons were taking away stores belonging to the Knights back to Pont-à-Mousson, they evidently expecting ours would remain. With the greatest good temper, under great provocation, Mr. Parker treated the demands as impossible to grant in their full extent, declining to re-open boxes in the absence of the General, and giving as little as possible, knowing how very far the use that would be made of them would differ from that intended by those who had so nobly subscribed their money, not to supplement the military chest of the German army, but to help where help was really wanted.

It is to be hoped that, warned by the past,

in any future National effort of this sort, the subscribers will insist on having some voice in the distribution of their money and goods, and not leave all blindly to the caprice and personal feelings of any small executive Committee with irresponsible power, however well adapted individuals may be for the office of control over hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling. Our stores were worth about 500*l.*, and many were most expensive and comparatively useless. Had they been selected by an army surgeon accustomed to the rough work of field Ambulances, he would never have chosen costly articles only fit for a London or Paris hospital, and many things which were sent were utterly useless; for instance, the spongio piline and the oiled silk; gutta percha tissue, at a third of the price, answering the same purpose, while the spongio piline only served to line splints, for which tow was equally good. But the frightful waste of money will be more clearly seen as we go on.

This affair being settled, the Surgeon went off to an operation and Louise to her stables, leaving me with strict injunctions not to leave the garret, nor to part with a single article, in case of further demands being made. I finished putting up my little baggages, and was leaning out of the window, looking into the street, wondering where our waggons were, when I heard steps behind me, and, turning sharply, saw two Knights of St. John entering the inner room. I called out, but they did not hear me, and, going in after them, I found them trying to read the label on a case of gutta percha tissue. I said it was the ladies' bedroom, and begged them to come out. The senior then said that he understood we were going, but of course our stores would be left for their use. I said No! certainly not; the stores would go with us. Such were the General's orders, and we should report ourselves to Prince Pless. They muttered and grumbled all in vain. I persisted, and finding it was no use, they departed.

I was very glad, however, to see the waggons drawn up on the other side of the road. They had been obtained by requisition, and, as this word will often have to be used, it may be as well here to explain what it really means. In most cases licensed robbery. Everything in the shape of horses, waggons, drivers, provisions, fuel, and bedding, the commune or parish is bound to furnish at their own cost on warrants signed by any German official; the cost to be repaid by the Mairie, or, as we might say, corporation of the place, after the war. Carriages, waggons, and horses, however, are invariably seized for the conveyance of military stores and the convenience of the officers of the invading army, and no money will procure them; but a warrant from the official in charge of the train service to some other official in possession of the desired vehicles generally has the right effect. The carriages and horses rarely, if ever, come back to their owners; the wag-

gons and their drivers are taken from the farms to wander in the track of the army, receiving only scanty food and forage; but, after all, it is the requisitions in large towns which offer such a sure means of getting anything required and paying nothing for it. The working of this system, however, will be better seen when we relate our residence in Orleans. Yet even this taking of waggons and horses shows what the misery of an invaded country is, for it must be remembered that not only the invaders but the defenders must avail themselves of every mode of transport for troops and munitions of war, and the seat of war is often as unhappy under one as the other. Think, too, of the entire stand-still of all farming operations—no ploughing, and consequ ntly no sowing, no carrying the produce to the nearest market, no communication between town and village, no means of going to see friends or transact the commonest business

fifteen or twenty miles off, and the railways either unused or taken up solely for the military movements. The loneliness of the roads, the hush of all the noises caused by the daily occupations of village life, the corn left ungarnered and rotting in shocks on the fields, some reaped and lying where it fell, the absence of all men except the very old and the very young, mark what are the hourly deprivations of war, not to speak of the terrible scenes which the neighbourhood of a battle or the passing of a great army brings about. We fully intended to send back our waggons; but as the drivers afterwards took it into their own hands and escaped we are certainly not responsible for their fate, whatever it might be.

Louise soon returned, followed by Mr. Parker and one of the Swiss surgeons, and we were nailing up the last of the chests when the door suddenly opened and in came the Secretary, breathless with haste, and in an

evident state of excitement. We stared with astonishment, he having told us he was off direct to England. He began by saying he had been to Ars-sur-Moselle, and brought us lanterns, blankets, tea, sugar, and bread. We assured him that we regretted he had taken the trouble, as we were off to Pont-à-Mousson. His anger was excessive. He disputed the right of the General to give us orders, and Louise and I declared, however that might be, we would not be under his orders again. We had been told before we left England by Colonel Loyd Lindsay to report ourselves to Prince Pless at the King's head-quarters; this we should certainly do, and end the uncertainty, and it was simply to the head-quarters that the General was about to take us. He then said of course we left the stores behind us, and to this we replied that the orders of the General were imperative—the stores were to go with us, not another article was to be given at Ste.

Marie, and we declined to accept any orders from him, now or at any future time, and for so doing we would be answerable to the Committee at home. He grew so angry that the Surgeon took him out into the street to try and cool him down, and here he commenced giving away a quantity of cigars he had brought with him in a light waggon to all the soldiers standing about.

A German officer interfered, said there were plenty of cigars in store there, and he had better take them back with him. On this a most violent scene ensued. Now, he had in hand 200*l.* of the committee's money, and with some of this he had bought the various stores he brought up, and which he afterwards gave away recklessly on the journey to Pont-à-Mousson. In reckless giving, however, he was not worse than many others, and it was often a source of bitter regret to us, when we thought of the hardly earned shilling of the workman, and the widow's mite, and the school-

children's pennies that had gone with the princely donations of the wealthy to make up the enormous sum that has made England famous for ill-regulated charity through the length and breadth of Europe.

We were very sorry that no one gave a helping hand to Mr. Parker. He and the Swiss had to move down every box, and lift them into the waggons, whilst the Knights of St. John and their orderlies stood and looked on. Determination, however, carried the day; but, in consequence of all these delays, it was one o'clock before we started. We were not offered any dinner before we left, but we were now anxious to get fairly off. The work at Ste. Marie was so far done that things had been got into order, the wounded were being rapidly evacuated by death or removal, and it was evident that in a couple of days more only those cases would be left which would probably have to remain there weeks, whilst the imminence of fresh battles rendered it

necessary for us to push forward to our original destination. The Secretary, having no further business in Ste. Marie, accompanied us in his waggon, and with three others of our own we left Ste. Marie and the Knights of Ste. John, turned up a little lane which led from the main street to the back of the village, and emerged on the battle-field, which lay between Ste. Marie and Gorst, on the road through Vionville and Ars-sur-Moselle, and past Cormy to Pont-à-Mousson.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BURNING OF THE RED-CROSS BANNER.

Our cortege made its way slowly up the muddy lane and came out on the wide open bend of the battle-field. It was a huge plateau, the distance bounded by low woods, and as the afternoon sunshine came out bright and clear it looked sadder than ever. Our road crossed it, and we were very glad when it took a slight dip and brought us to the entrance of St. Privat, a ruined village, and up to the door of a house of the better class, occupied as an Ambulance and also as quarters for soldiers, many of whom were lounging about, idle and dirty. We halted, and the Secretary, calling to some Germans to assist

him, commenced a distribution of goods, principally those which he had brought with him; but one box of English stores was so hastily broken open that next day the Swiss surgeon brought to me half-a-dozen valuable lancets and knives which he had found in the straw of the waggon. How many were lost on the way no one could tell. The bread was given to the soldiers, who, as the Secretary said, had not very large rations and must be hungry; probably they were. The German soldiery have an immense capacity for eating, but the poor miserable peasants who came around, and begged even for the broken bits of biscuit we had, were rather more hungry still; but the argument used then and afterwards, when good port wine sent from England was given to the troops, was, some might think, unanswerable: 'Poor fellows! they have hard work before them, and require strength.'

It seemed ages before we moved on. The Secretary was evidently in no hurry to get to

Pont-à-Mousson. At last I ordered our driver to push on, and he had to follow; we came out again on the wide, barren plain, and we overlooked a valley in which stood a large village, Gorst, we were told; but just where the road descended, yet still on the bend, was a lonely building. It looked as if it had been a barrack, and was surrounded by a wall enclosing the yard, which extended about fifty yards in width, between the building and the wall. It was a mere shed, the roof had fallen in, and the iron rails of the staircase hung, broken and twisted, from the side wall of the top storey. It had evidently been burned, how we knew not, and the intention was evidently to hurry past it; but the Swiss surgeon and our English friend stopped the waggons and begged us to get out and see the ruin, and as a waggon behind broke down at this instant and had to be repacked, the Secretary had no excuse for urging us forward.

We entered within the ruined enclos ure.A

fearful smell met us; it was the first time we had ever experienced it. We knew it afterwards too well at Bazeilles. And what were we walking upon? Not cinders; the charred morsels were too soft for that? We turned sick with horror; human beings had perished here by fire. We went out directly, and saw the blackened skeletons of horses and pigs in the stables. Why, with the open country all around, had no effort at escape been made, and what were the charred morsels of wood, like the remains of a flagstaff, that had crushed in with the roof, and those remains of iron bedsteads? Standing in the court-yard, we heard the story. From that flagstaff the Red-Cross flag had floated. It was a deserted barrack, occupied as an Ambulance on the evening of the battle, and in it were three hundred French, wounded. The Germans passed on, Gorst was occupied, and two or three days after the battle they commenced firing on the barrack. They

saw the flag, but persisted that it was occupied by soldiers. It caught fire, and as the wretched occupants, those who could rise from their beds at least, tried to escape, they were met by a fire of musketry, and all perished together; and there was the ruined, roofless barrack, standing alone, its blackened outlines, cut clear against the blue sky, sad witnesses of a sad event. It was a miserable mistake is the only excuse; but the flag should, at all events, have induced some enquiry, before cannon and rifle did their murderous work on those sheltered under it.

Saddened and oppressed by such a fearful scene, we remounted our waggon and drove on. Gorst was as dreary and deserted as all the other villages. A few scared women appeared, and one or two old men. We asked for a little water, and a woman ran for a glass and got us some from a pump close by. She seemed half-frightened, but

our assurance that we were not Prussians encouraged her, and she told us all the boys and men in the village were gone to the war, and there was nothing left to eat. They had not even bread; all had been taken from them, even the potatoes in their little patches of garden, and their clothes, such as were useless being cut to pieces before their eyes. But revenge would come some day. From first to last that was the cry; and it will come, if not in our day, in that of the children who from childhood are being trained all over France for the great day of triumph—the entry into Berlin. It may be a dream, but it is a widespread one, and those who live to a good old age may see if it is realised or not.

After an hour or so we entered Vionville, a very pretty place, with a wide central street, and here we came to another stop. The Secretary ran off after sundry friends, and, whilst we were waiting, an English gentleman with a knapsack on his back came up

and introduced himself as Mr. Herbert of the British Society. I told him our troubles with the Secretary. Nothing could be more kind and considerate than he was, and he begged us to write to him, giving us an address, and he would come to our help at any time. He was on a walking tour round the battle-field and the villages. I am sure he must have seen the greatest misery and distress, and if he knew as well as we did of the large stores of the knights at Ste. Marie, he must have wondered why they did not ride round the neighbourhood and afford relief to the Ambulances where the wounded were starving, and to the peasantry who were also dying of hunger. The peasantry were French, and the knights never professed to relieve them; but the Ambulances were, to say the least of it, neutral, and the sick and wounded have no nationality. And why, with all this pressure of want, stores were sent back to the huge central depôt at Pont-à-Mousson, no one could tell. It was, perhaps,

the utter ignorance of the Knights as to its existence. We can safely say they never entered an Ambulance at Ste. Marie, never rode out to enquire into the condition of those established not two miles from that place, and what they did, or why they were there at all, is beyond comprehension. They ate and drank the best of everything, they occupied the best houses as quarters, and enjoyed a perpetual pic-nic safely out of danger, but sufficiently near to say they had gone through a campaign. They were indeed carpet knights, and have their spurs yet to win.

We got tired of waiting, sitting, as we were, in an August sun, and when the Secretary brought a gentleman, whom he introduced as Mr. Appia of the Geneva Society, I told him plainly we were being detained here, I knew not why, and it would be dark before we got to Pont-à-Mousson, and did he not think he had better move on. He said most assuredly,

and instantly asked the Secretary to go on, and we started, having been one hour in the main street of Vionville; and here more stores were given to the soldiers, some bacon, I particularly remember, for a piece was reserved, which we were told was for our dinner. We got fairly out of Vionville at last, and as far as some trees; here we came to another halt, and the Swiss surgeon came up and told me the Secretary was proposing to light fires and cook the bacon, and have a kind of gipsy party, and he was very uneasy. He had promised the General to see us safe to Pont-à-Mousson by seven o'clock, and really, if we were to light fires and cook bacon, we should not be there before midnight.

We remonstrated violently against this new detention, and the idea was given up. The bacon was served round raw with a slice of bread, and we were so hungry we ate it, and having very soon finished, we insisted on going on. The surgeons mounted the first

waggon, and by dint of keeping up its boy driver to his work we jogged along faster. Our driver was a stupid-looking peasant, speaking only German, and his horses were harnessed with the loosest traces that ever were seen, which had at intervals to be disentangled. He looked like an utter idiot, and for such we took him. It would have been better for him had he been only an idiot, as we shall see.

After leaving Vionville, we descended from what may be called the upper level by a most lovely gorge, the sides clothed with rich foliage down to the little stream which runs through it. We came across many a beautiful bit of scenery in these parts, so rarely visited by travellers, no railroad being within several miles, and we came to the decided conclusion that a waggon is the only way of travelling by which you really see the country. There is a remark in 'Eöthen' that we Europeans do not understand the true enjoyment of tra-

velling. We go from place to place, that is all. We found the truth of the idea. We lived our day as if this quiet state of passing over the ground was our normal condition, arriving at a decided resting-place, a break in our usual course of life, and we saw more of the country and the people than years of rail-road travelling would have enabled us to do.

We gradually descended to Ars-sur-Moselle, and once more saw the Roman aqueduct. We had passed through it on our way to Ste. Marie, but had missed the beauties of the gorge in the darkness of the night, and after leaving it must have lost our way, for we certainly did not go through Vionville.. The long, narrow street was crowded with troops; a Red-Cross flag hung from almost every house. The shops were all open and a brisk trade was going on, but more in what are called fancy articles than food or clothing. There was but little of those to be seen. We drove through the town, and after another hour or

so found ourselves by the bridge of Cormy. We did not cross it or enter the town, but went steadily on. It was quite dark when we reached Pont-à-Mousson at half-past nine instead of seven.

We halted in a large square, surrounded by arcades like Bologna, and were very glad to hear English voices calling to us. There were our friends. Of course they had finished dinner, and it was so late that we were glad to go to the quarters they had found us. The ladies all occupied a third-storey room in the second best hotel. The little salle-à-manger was crowded with soldiers smoking and drinking, and it was impossible to sup there. The good people of the house declared it was impossible to serve us upstairs, but I caught a small boy, who was running about with clay pipes for the Germans, and the offer of a franc enlisted him. We got some knives and forks, plates and glasses, and I went into the kitchen and saw a pair of chickens in the oven. They

were for the German officers' supper, but a little private arrangement transferred them to my share, and my aide-de-camp mounted the stairs in triumph with our spoils. What a supper we made! We really had had so little since we left Brussels, that even the moderate quantity we eat was more than we could well bear. Our gentlemen had gone to quarters somewhere else, and the General told us he would let us know before noon if we started for head-quarters that day or not; he must first ascertain where they were.

Our waggons were left in the centre of the 'Grande Place,' under a Prussian guard. I had proposed bringing in, besides our little baggages, the one small portmanteau we each of us possessed, and Louise quite agreed it would be safer. However, the General declared that no one could run off with the things with two sentinels watching the waggons, and we bowed to his superior judgment, particularly as he had a very valuable tin box

there himself. The hotel seemed dirtier than ever when we went down next day. It probably was, in times of peace, a very fair one; but what could be expected with every room full of soldiers. Many of them brought in their own rations and cooked them themselves over the kitchen fire. The officers required suppers up to two in the morning, and there was no refusing the imperious conquerors. A blow with the sheathed sword, or the smashing all the glass in the room, would have been the mildest form of punishment. There was no help, and no redress, and no pay. The poor people told us their sorrows, and gave us coffee. The Red-Cross badge was too often the pretext for demanding lodging and food by requisition, but we always gave it clearly to be understood we came to help and not to oppress, and that we should pay honestly, as in peace time, for what we had.

After coffee we went out. I remarked to Louise how insecure two of the portmanteaus

were, the General's box and the leather trunk of one of our ladies. Louise pointed out that her trunk was fastened by a chain, and mine buried under a heavy chest that required two men to move, but she thought we had better tell the others. We went back to do so, but they were out, and we waited a little while in the salle-à-manger. The Swiss surgeon came up to the window, and handed in the instruments he had found scattered in the straw. He had had his orders to go direct to Nancy, and with much regret we took leave of him and his friend. They told us of some very good hot baths, and we went to them. They were far superior to any I ever had in England, and we only paid a franc for each, including a plentiful supply of hot towels and a special room, which, we were assured, no 'dirty German officers' had ever used.

On our return we passed the waggons. The two trunks were gone! We instantly gave the alarm. The General came up, and a

search was commenced. Mr. W—— declared directly he distrusted the driver. (our supposed idiot), for he had found him selling the forage given out for the horses, and Mr. A—— said he had always disliked the downcast look of his face, whilst Louise and I persisted we had always thought him more knave than fool. All these complimentary opinions, however, did not find the lost baggage, and the only thing to be done was to replace, as far as possible, the contents of the portmanteau of our lady companion. I told the Secretary that clearly the Society ought to pay the damage. Had the baggage been brought in, as we requested, this would not have happened. I begged her to make an estimate of the value. She made one, far too moderate, not even valuing the things at a fair price. Part of the sum claimed the Secretary paid, saying he could spare no more. I trust the rest may be paid. When I named it to the Committee they hesitated. With all the thousands

they flung recklessly away they need not have scrupled at giving a five-pound note to replace necessary clothing, lost on actual service by one who was certainly a most active, faithful, and unpaid servant. The General gave notice to the German authorities. His box contained his uniform, and was therefore very valuable, and also his medals. The driver was instantly arrested, and the Provost-Marshal offered to shoot him then and there; but it was considered advisable to try and screw the truth out of him. Either he had not taken the things, or was not alarmed at the Provost-Marshal's threat, for he confessed nothing.

The day passed on, and no orders were given. Finally, we were told to be ready at six A.M. precisely the next morning, and a fresh waggon was found to replace that of the driver, consigned to prison for further examination. We walked a little about the town. It was very dull, the shops mostly shut, and, like all towns occupied by troops

during war, very dirty; the central square littered with straw, broken bottles, and all the débris of a bivouac. German troopers have a peculiar habit of riding on the foot-paths and pavements, and it does not add to the cleanliness of a place, and is peculiarly inconvenient. Probably they do not do it in Berlin, and it reminds one of the arrangements in Damascus before the massacres of 1860, when the terrible punishment inflicted on the Mussulmans compelled them to change their insolent order, that no Christians should walk on the side-paths, but run their risks in the midst of the confusion of an Oriental street. Did the Prussian generals take a hint from this, and try to force the unhappy people of the occupied cities into the dirt and danger of their own streets? It really seems so. I have often wondered, if the French had invaded Germany, would they have been as arrogant and contemptuous and unfeeling as the German soldiery. Would they have for-

gotten as completely that their turn might come some day, and as they had sowed so they should reap? Perhaps so. Military success is a hard trial of character. Few pass it unscathed, and the hardheartedness it engenders is only one of the many forms of the demoralisation which are the result of even one campaign.

We were glad to shut ourselves up in our own room, from which, later in the evening, we descended to the salle-à-manger, and finding a small table, we took possession of it. Amidst all the noise and smoke we were rejoiced to find that the soldiers had not yet come into dinner, and the room was filled with Frenchmen, whose kindness and courtesy made us quite at home. Dinner was a difficulty. Some German officers were dining in a small room which opened off ours, and demanding everything there was to eat and the attention of every waiter. My pipe boy of the night before gave us a hint what to do,

and the next dish that he brought past us I quietly took out of his hand, and so on till we had got enough, and the officers dare not storm at us; but we very soon adjourned upstairs, resolved to have a good and long night's rest before our march of the ensuing day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHASE AFTER THE KING.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning when, on the 27th of August, we all assembled booted and spurred at 6 A.M., ready to start on our first day's pilgrimage in chase of the King's head-quarters. The aged Knight of St. John, it seems, had declared that it was too dangerous for the ladies to go on further, and that the stores had far better be left at the dêpot of the Knights of St. John. It was not wise to contradict the venerable Baron H——. So he was implored to go to bed and to sleep, and the General, knowing his usual habits, arranged that ourselves and the baggage were to start at an early hour, the

greatest care being taken not to awaken the Baron, and when later in the day Mr. W——'s light carriage, which conveyed the General, Mr. A——, and Baron H——, should overtake us several leagues away from Pont-à-Mousson, it would be too late for the Knight to object. Fortunately his morning sleep was a prolonged one, for several delays occurred. The gentlemen were obliged to go to the Provost-Marshal and give evidence as regarded the robbery, and evidently the Provost-Marshal had not had his breakfast and begun his daily official career, for we had the pleasure of sitting waiting in the waggon and watching our friends sunning themselves in the balcony of the Provost's house for at least an hour. The lost baggage was not discovered, I believe it never was; but I suppose that ultimately the driver was convicted of being the thief, as we heard afterwards that a few days after we left he was shot.

At last we started and went slowly on over

very pretty country, a splendid Route Imperial, and not a trace of war to be seen anywhere. We read, and worked, and chatted, admired the view, wondered where we should sleep at night, and met with no adventures of any sort. We passed through one small village, and just beyond it a peasant boy overtook us, and told us that over that very road, not many days before, Napoleon III. and his son had ridden, on their way back from Saarbruck, and the great French army had turned off to the right, pointing to a road which diverged and crossed the plain in a lower level than the one we were on. We asked him how it happened that at his age, eighteen or nineteen, he had not been summoned to join the army, and he answered, with a bright smile coming all over his face, 'The luck I had, madam (*la bonne chance*)! I was drawn in the conscription. Ah! see now, what for! to be shot dead, or wounded, or prisoner. Only a few days were left me, but

the Prussians came; they ordered, on pain of death, no one should leave the village who was of age to fight. Did I wish to go? No, madam; a thousand times no. I said a very good day (*bien bon jour*), and thank you. I shall stay with the plough and the cows and sheep, and here I am, two arms and two legs and my head on my shoulders, and the rest of the boys may fight if they like. What matters it to me? King or emperor, it is all one to Baptiste. Thank you, madame, good luck to you (this in return for two ten centime pieces); you go to nurse the wounded. Ah! I will never trouble you; a very good day.' And off went our heroic friend, his dog at his heels, whistling some gay French airs. Quietly and steadily we drove on, and at last we came where two roads parted; one turning to the right, round a rising hill, was evidently our onward way, the other wound up the hill to a village on the height.

Just at this time we saw the carriage of our

friends rapidly coming up the long straight road behind us, the Baron still sleeping. They told us to take the road up the hill. It was three o'clock, and we could lunch at the little auberge, and up it accordingly we went. We found that the village was called Gironville, and its situation was certainly lovely. It stands on the wooded height, which seems suddenly to block the road, overlooking an expanse of cultivated country, with here and there a distant group of white houses and a church tower to mark the scattered villages. The church of Gironville and the graveyard round it rose directly behind the little street of the village, and was approached by rough stone steps placed on the hill-side. The inn itself was rude enough, but very clean, and with an abundance of eggs and butter which was astounding under the circumstances; but the merry old landlady explained it by telling us the village stood off the main road, the great armies marched past down below,

and had no time to stop and mount the steep road to the village. Besides, it was too poor a place to tempt even the Uhlans to turn aside to make requisitions. The arrival of so large a party as ours utterly broke down the good old dame's resources, and Louise and the General took possession of the great kitchen fire, and cooked eggs and bacon, while Mr. W—— and myself found plates, and knives, and glasses in corner cupboards, and the Baron discovered a large, cold, brick floored room, not invaded by the peasantry, which he considered more adapted to our dignity, and where he insisted on our lunching. I am sorry to say that we should all have preferred the kitchen, for it was not a very warm day, and the fire was very pleasant; besides, eggs and bacon are much better transferred instantly from the frying-pan to the table. However, not choosing to leave our escort to lunch by himself in solitary grandeur, we submitted, and the result was a

series of fatiguing journeys to fetch fresh supplies.

After lunch Louise and I wandered up to the little church. It was closed, a very unusual thing in France, but a woman came to open it. It had no architectural beauties, and was very old and simple. Returning to the inn, we saw a little crowd in the street; conspicuous in it were a fat baker in his white apron and our friend the Admiral, who was delivering a lecture on the politics of France to the admiring villagers. Whenever he was missing, his tall form and merry Saxon face were sure to be descried in some such a situation, and the natives listened and looked in wonder at his size and his eloquence. It was just five when, as he would have said, we got under weigh once more, and we humbly suggested 'where were we going?' 'To the camp near Chalons,' was the answer, 'by way of Commercy. Before we overtook you, we were afraid you might have turned off to the left,

and gone by way of St. Dizier, which you would have found occupied by the French.' As we never had the slightest intention of going anywhere except slowly along the straight road till our friends came up, they need not have alarmed themselves on that account.

The General urged on the drivers, the horses actually broke into a trot, and in an hour we entered Commercy. Going a trot in the waggons is not a pleasant process; the store chests bumped about, and we were considerably shaken. Those vehicles are never designed to go beyond a dignified walk. In the light and brightness of an August afternoon Commercy looked a very pretty town, with no edifice of any peculiar size or beauty in it, except an old château, modernised into a barrack, and a very comfortable inn. The German army had passed quietly through it, leaving only about thirty troopers in the place, which, though containing some 4,000 inhabi-

tants, was not of sufficient importance to require a garrison, and so escaped the scourge of a military occupation and the heavy requisitions which accompany it. At this time the Germans had not committed the excesses they afterwards did when success had blinded them to all considerations, except that they were victors living amongst the vanquished, where might makes right, and much was done that caused even their own officers to say, 'This is not war; it is pillage.' So Commercy looked even cheerful in the evening sunlight.

When next morning we descended early to breakfast, Louise and myself strolled into the kitchen. We always found amusement and information in chatting with the people, and heard and saw many things that otherwise would have escaped us. One thing that morning surprised us, the enormous quantity of butter. Certainly the fair and fertile plains in the neighbourhood were admirably suited for pasturage, but we had seen so little

of late that it was a novelty to us. It was neatly made into half kilogrammes, about an English pound, and wrapped up in cool green leaves. It had evidently been brought in from the neighbouring farms, and was sufficient evidence that the invaders had spared the cows at all events. We assembled round the fire, and listened to the tales of the passing of the two grand armies.

At last we were properly packed into our waggons, and provided with pillows of hay, Louise and myself voyaging together. Again a lovely day, and no signs of war and devastation on the country we passed through. About noon we arrived at a small village called Ligny, and halted for lunch. We had, besides the Knight and his cross, a bodyguard of two Prussian soldiers, who, as it turned out, were solely and wholly for the safety and protection of the said Knight. At Ligny these soldiers and our drivers entered a barn in which was a good deal of hay, and not only

took enough for their horses at the time, but laid in a stock sufficient for several days, and also in so doing quite spoiled our comfortable couch in the waggon, by piling it up too high. This afforded us a good opportunity of indignantly tossing it out, and thereby pacifying the unfortunate farmer, who justly remonstrated that he was bound, he knew, to furnish the forage for one meal, but not to supply it for two or three days. The Prussian soldiers would listen to nothing; but we made our coachmen disgorge their surplus hay.

At this time, though we were about to leave, the Admiral was missing, nor did we see the usual crowd. He emerged in triumph from somewhere with two geese and a rabbit, which he declared he had stolen, and on being remonstrated with on the style of his proceedings, as being highly objectionable, modified the statement by declaring he had paid for them in German coin of little value, and resembling dirty silver, which the deluded

owners of the geese accepted as francs and half-francs. Probably he got them cheap, we'll hope it was no worse; but ever after that, the legend ran that he announced us everywhere in the following terms:—'We are the English column. We have five ladies; we have a great many stores. I have stolen a goose; will you have it?' Not knowing where we should get our next meal, but evidently feeling bound to make restitution somewhere. Everybody was so astonished that nobody ever accepted the offer, and the geese in their feathers travelled on with us.

We pursued our way, thinking of our own quiet England, and almost fancying we could hear the ringing of the church bells for the afternoon service. There was little distinction between Saturday and Sunday through all the occupied departments, and the soldiers of the 'Pious King' seemed to put it aside as a sort of luxury these people had no right to indulge in, and from whose observance they themselves

were specially absolved in right of conquest. Requisitions must be made, troops moved, and the routine of war go on, just as on any other day; but as we came into Bar-le-Duc, every-one was walking about in Sunday costume.

The town was full of Bavarian soldiers, and Mr. W. and the General thought it better to push on to a quiet village called Ruvigny, just beyond. The only difficulty was the Baron. He had started with the object of going to Bar-le-Duc, and had enquired at intervals all the way along how far it was still to that place; but he was soundly sleeping, and it was thought better not to wake him, but to bring him along to head-quarters. He was going to meet a son, whose corps was with the advanced guard, and therefore it was useless his staying in Bar-le-Duc; besides, he saved a great deal of trouble with outposts and sentries, and therefore, on all accounts, he was allowed to sleep. What a gay, pretty town Bar-le-Duc looked as we drove slowly

through it. It was here the Young Pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie, passed three years of his exile; and here, too, in the Church of St. Pierre, are the remains of several princes of the House of Lorraine. It is a thoroughly French-looking town, and we were told many Parisians had country houses here, where they passed the autumn. A group of Bavarian officers in their light blue uniforms were standing in front of the hotel, and it was certainly a wise decision to go on the four miles that still lay between us and Ruvigny.

We soon arrived at our destination for the night, and found the little hotel unoccupied. Twenty-four hours before the head-quarters had passed through; and here we heard the news of the flank march from Chalons to intercept MacMahon's army on their way to relieve Bazaine and Metz. It was, therefore, clear that we must turn away from the Chalons road, and follow the advance of the

army by St. Menehould and Grand Pré. The great battle of the campaign was evidently close at hand, and an early start next day was resolved upon. The Baron was assured we were close to Bar-le-Duc, and sat down to dinner with that comfortable conviction. His notions of geography had got more confused than ever since we left Ste. Marie-aux-Chênes, and he was quite resigned to be carried about in a comfortable carriage and allowed his undisturbed repose, assured in his own mind that some day or other he should find himself at Bar-le-Duc.

As usual, our early start ended in breakfast at nine, and getting off at ten. We may be permitted to observe here that the ladies were always ready. It was the gentlemen whose toilette seemed such a prolonged occupation, for we used to hear them beginning to stir about at a very early hour, but it was certainly not a very early one when they made their appearance.

Another quiet march brought us to a small village, through which the German army had passed only the day before. We were close on the track now. We halted to rest the horses, and walked to the house of the Curé to get the keys of the church. He was absent, but his old housekeeper received us most cordially, and showed us her once neat kitchen, now in the dirty and disorderly state always the result of a room having been occupied as sleeping quarters for soldiers. They had demanded dinner and supper, and in no inconsiderable quantity; but though many empty bottles showed the ravages made in her master's cellar, she insisted on our drinking some of the wine, made, she told us, from the produce of a vineyard close by.

The church looked quite new. It had been lately restored, and the stones and débris had not been removed from around it. It was airy, clean, and spacious, but nothing worthy

of remark in it. It was an unusually large church for so small a village; that was all. In it we met a young man, by his dress a farmer or small proprietor of a better class. He had just ridden in from the neighbourhood, and told us the French picquets were close at hand. As he then ascended the tower, he probably went to look for them. We were rather diverted at the idea of what a waking the German Baron would have from his dreams if they did pounce upon us. It was all one to us. Indeed, we began to think that the exceeding unpopularity of the German armies rendered it by no means agreeable serving with them, and if the French Lancers had caught us we should not have regretted it very much. At least, I can answer for Louise and myself.

The country about us was hilly and well wooded. We could not help remarking, as we went along, the utter solitude of the roads. We never met even a peasant's cart, nor did

we see a living being in the fields by the roadside. The corn was standing in shocks; there was no one to garner it in. The scattered cottages were deserted. We were indeed coming close to the seat of war. Late in the afternoon we came near St. Menehould, and the General proposed to drive on in the carriage and see the state of affairs—if we were really and truly on the right track, and what prospect there was of obtaining a night's lodging. It seemed an age that we waited, St. Menehould being hidden by the rising ground up which our road took its way. It was, in reality, an hour before we caught sight of the returning carriage.

St. Menehould was full of troops, but the King had gone on. There was a hope of a lodging in some private house, and we were, at all events, to rest there for the night, even if we had to sleep in the waggons. The entrance to the town was excessively pretty: across a bridge, with an old château on a high rock

overhanging the stream. A vast number of troops were encamped for the night on the meadows which bordered the river, the Aisne, and the long street in front of us was blocked with provision and ammunition waggons. It was at St. Menehould that poor Louis XVI. was detected by the postmaster Drouet, from his likeness to the head on a coin he gave, when the post-horses were changed; and it was at Varennes, some sixteen miles farther on, that he was arrested by the same over-energetic official, who had ridden on horseback to overtake the king's carriage and intercept his flight to the frontier.

We had plenty of time to indulge in historical reminiscences, for just over the bridge we came to another stop. Night was closing in, chilly and damp, and we were very glad when the General, who had gone on into the town, sent the Admiral back to show us where to go. The waggons and horses were

left in a large open square with trees on one side of it, and we ourselves, with our little baggages, walked with our guide round the corner and into the main street. The town seemed much larger from the crowd and confusion in the streets. The hotel, Mr. A—— told us, was impossible; but three rooms had been found in three different houses, besides one for the gentlemen, and the hospitable owners had refused all remuneration, and only expressed their anxiety to make us welcome. Giving them all due credit for kindly feeling towards those who had come on an errand of charity, we learned afterwards that we conferred quite as great a favour as we received by accepting lodgings in a private house. It was far better to have English ladies than German soldiers clamouring for wine and brandy and supper, and too often pocketing the little ornaments about the room, if they happened to strike their fancy. However, we were most warmly

welcomed by our hostess, a pretty young married woman, showed into the very best bed-room, which was thoroughly comfortable and even luxurious, and, very cold and tired, we refused all the offers of our kind hostess to find us something of what was left (for they had had Prussians in the house all day, and some were even still quartered there), and would only accept a cup of coffee and a morsel of bread, and were beginning to take off our boots, when a knock at the door was followed by the entrance of Mr. W——, to tell us they were all very hungry, and had resolved to have a good supper in their rooms. The other ladies were there, and they were to cook the Admiral's rabbit and a chicken they had found somewhere, and he begged us to come over the way with him. A mental calculation how long a rabbit and a chicken would take to cook under evidently unfavourable circumstances determined us to decline the supper party, and we discovered next day

we had had at least two hours more sleep than the rest; so very long did it take to get ready the table, prepare the eatables, and find bread, knives, forks, &c. All night long, however, the rumble of heavy artillery and the marching past of troops never ceased. Now and then the shrill call of a trumpet rang out in the still air. The army was in full advance, and when we rose in the morning few soldiers were left in St. Menehould. Our start was deferred, for the roads in front were so blocked that it was better to wait awhile, and we should reach Grand Pré just as soon. The King was there, and we should there receive our final orders.

We left the town about half-past ten, and escaped the crush on the roads. We halted, as usual, about one o'clock in a little village. This was now the 30th of August, and already vague rumours of French defeats were flying about. A drunken man reeled past our waggon calling out, 'Perdue est la France!'

and snatched at my railroad rug, which I snatched back again, remarking, 'If France is lost, that is no reason I should lose my *couverture*.' The General was very anxious to press on. Great events were occurring, or about to occur, ahead of us. Our halt was cut short, and we took the rest of the road to Grand Pré at a lively pace. Along a straight route impériale, through a fragrant pine wood, over a flat country plain where the distant road dipped down to reach a village, the tower of whose church we saw rising suddenly before us, then slowly through a blocked-up street, and we were in Grand Pré. There was a sudden stop to let a carriage and four go by, preceded by outriders in old-fashioned cocked hats. It was the King himself! There was fighting in front, about six miles off, the people said, and he had gone out to the battle-field.

CHAPTER IX.

ENGLAND TO THE RESCUE.

THE General, who had preceded us into Grand Pré, ordered our drivers to turn up a street to the right off the central market-place, and we found ourselves opposite a handsome red brick house, the contents of one window by the side of the hall-door showing the master was a chemist. He, with his wife and son, were waiting to receive us, thankful it was no worse—that is, Prussian troops—and welcomed us into the rooms vacated only an hour before by the King and his immediate staff. A piece of white chalk was produced, and 'Ten officers of the Medical Department' was written on the door. This included the

ladies, of course, and looked very absurd, but was very useful. We deposited our baggage, and while the gentlemen went into the market-place for news, we saw the horses and servants all placed together in the stable, and from the little garden in front watched the confusion going on just at the end of the street.

For two days, our host told us, the great army had been passing day and night. Every house had been turned into quarters for troops, and every scrap of provision carried off. All day they had heard distant firing, and no one knew what the next twenty-four hours might bring forth. It was seven o'clock before the gentlemen returned. They had heard of two horses to be bought at only twenty pounds each, and having brought their saddles had invested their money on the purchase of them. That is, the General and Mr. A——. Mr. Parker and Mr. W—— had arranged to take on a small selection of stores in the carriage. The Baron, who had a bad cold, was to be left

for the night in charge of us, and they would send back for us directly they had ascertained the exact locality of the battle-field, and where our services would be of most use. We all sat down to supper, and had the honour of finishing the King's leg of mutton; and whilst we were still laughing over the absurdity of our so immediately succeeding him as to eat up the supper intended for him, we heard loud lamentations outside, and Mr. W—— went to see what had happened. He found a lady who was in such a state of fear at the arrival of so many Prussians, and so perfectly convinced that they were about to burn down the town, that she was imploring our hostess, a friend of hers, to allow her to hide herself and her daughter, a pretty girl of thirteen or fourteen, in the first convenient cellar.

Mr. W—— tried to pacify her and induce her to return home, but she wept on and refused. He then suggested having a guard in the house in the shape of a couple of the English

ladies, and, with a vague and indefinite trust in their power to hold the entire Prussian army at bay, she consented. Mr. W—— most good-naturally pleaded with us on her behalf, and Louise and myself volunteered for the service. We finished our suppers, got our hand-bags, and prepared for our expedition. Our host and his son said they would go with us as far as the house, and having received our final orders to be in readiness at an hour's notice we went off in procession. We found the house was in the market-place, and a very nice one. Mr. G——, the husband, was there, safely locked up with a servant and a poor old lady of ninety, bed-ridden and literally paralysed with terror. We were shown into a very nice room, and Madame G—— assured us, after nine o'clock at night, when the retreat sounded, she should be better if the town was not burned down, as she fully expected. We declared that we did not see why the

Prussians should burn their sleeping quarters over their own heads, but she only shook hers, and said, 'That was nothing; they were used to it.'

We resolved at once to go to bed, and were just dropping off to sleep when, after a tap at the door, Madame entered with her daughter and a mattress, and implored us to allow her treasure to sleep on the floor under the shadow of our protection, and would we promise, promise on all we held most sacred, to defend her with our lives. We sat bolt upright, to make the affirmation more energetic, and said, 'Certainly.' The poor child being laid down in her clothes on the very hard mattress, and requested to compose herself, exit Madame, after taking an affecting farewell of her daughter. Five minutes afterwards in she came again, to beg us to put on our brassards over the sleeves of our night-dresses and keep our left arms out of bed, that the Red Cross might be visible directly any

marauding Prussian entered the room. As the idea seemed to afford her great comfort, we consented, only remarking that 'we did not allow Prussians in our bed-room;' and off we went to sleep again. Ten minutes afterwards in she came again, and informed us that the enemy were just about to set fire to the other corner of the town. We begged her to let us know when the flames reached the market-place; but after that she came in at intervals of certainly not more than five minutes each, to tell us that she heard dreadful shrieks, or smelt smoke, or was sure that the flames would reach us very soon. And so the weary night went on, till at half-past three A.M. she rushed in again to say her mother was dying.

This was something real and tangible, and Louise directly got up and went downstairs, and came back to tell me she thought it was true, and the family was most anxious the old lady should receive the last sacraments; but

not one dare venture out of the house to fetch the priest, and she herself had volunteered to do so. Of course I said if she went I should go, too, and dressed myself in haste. Madame G—— persuaded the old servant to take the biggest of lanterns and show us the way, and off we went. It was a lonely night, or rather morning, with the intense darkness that precedes dawn; not a sound was to be heard, not a living being to be seen. I objected to the lantern as unnecessary and likely to attract attention; but it appeared to be 'the proper thing' in Grand Pré, if anyone went out after dark, to have a lantern; that is, anyone who was somebody, and as Mrs. Nickleby says, 'Let us be genteel or die.' We blundered on, feeling very sleepy and tired, till the old woman and her lantern stopped before a house in a side street, and I gave a gentle ring at the bell, so as to avoid waking up any Prussians who might be quartered there. It was answered by the priest him-

self, an elderly man with grey hair, who said he would come directly. The dying woman was one of his oldest parishioners, and he did not wonder that the excitement and fear of the present time should prove fatal to her.

Having thus given the message, we suggested going back directly, and leaving him to follow when more fully dressed, but he begged us to wait and go with him to the church. It would be better; for himself he had no fear, but he had to bring the Host, and he dreaded insult from some foreign soldiers to his precious charge. We willingly consented. His old housekeeper came down and took us into the kitchen, and told us of the wreck and ruin in their poor household from the passing troops. At last the Curé appeared, and we walked up a dark lane or two, till we emerged on a platform shaded with huge elm trees, and overlooking the country below. The moon was setting, and the watch-fires glimmering here and there

marked the bivouac of a division of the German army. The old church threw a heavy shadow on the platform, bounded by its low wall, and so perfectly calm and peaceful was the scene, that it was impossible to realise the fact that the rising sun might shine on two mighty armies meeting in a death-struggle. The scent of autumn roses was strong on the quiet air, so quiet that the flame of a candle would not have flickered in it. We could willingly have leaned over the low wall for hours and looked on the fair scene below us, the dark woods, the open fields, and the dying watch-fires, but the turning of the key in the church door recalled us to present duties, and we followed the priest in. How strange it all looked by the dim light of the lantern: double rows of beds, neatly fitted up with mattresses and blankets, [redacted]ed down each side of the nave and in [redacted], but no one yet occupied them. [redacted] so white and clean that they

stared out at us in the darkness with a singular effect, the pillars of the aisle throwing weird shadows as we passed, on the beds below. The priest turned off into the sacristy, for there the Host was kept in these troublous times, and requested us to follow him close, and let the old woman and the lantern bring up the rear; and so we emerged from the church, the priest first, bearing the Host, and a little bell to ring if he met any of the faithful, and Louise and I well up behind, and slightly keeping on his right and left, to answer any questions that Prussian patrols might ask. The lantern behind threw a long streak of light down the black street, and the only sound was our steady tread and the clank of the old woman's sabots.

But we did not meet a soul. The Germans were too weary and the natives too frightened to prowl about at four in the morning. Only once a door opened and a baker looked out, the reflection of his oven fires showing our

little party distinctly. The priest rang his bell, the baker knelt on his knee for an instant, and we passed on into the darkness, like a phantom train. I ventured to suggest that the little bell was likely to attract attention, but the brave old man said he was not afraid, and of course we were not, or we should not have been there. Finally we arrived at the house, and leaving the priest in the room of the dying woman, we went upstairs, fairly worn out. Just as our eyes were closing in sleep, up rushed Madame again—the Prussians, the Prussians, they were in the house!

It was not a false alarm this time; and hastily putting on our dresses, not forgetting the brassards, down we went, and found one soldier in the little hall and two or three grouped round the door. The soldier inside did not look at all ferocious, and the others were evidently waiting patiently for something, so the best thing was to be indignant, and ask what they wanted. The enemy saluted

politely, and said they had fallen behind their regiment and had missed it. ''They could find no one to give them intelligence, and seeing a light in the house, they had knocked to ask if a regiment, describing their dress and facings, had gone through the town. Strangely enough, just as we entered Grand Pré, we had met it, and been told they had marched far and fast, and left many 'traînards' behind. We were able, therefore, to give them the desired information, and we asked if they were tired and hungry. They said 'very.' I observed that they could not sleep in the house, but I could procure them some bread and wine. They said how grateful they should be, and turning to Madame, who, not understanding a word, thought I was pleading for their lives, I said, 'If you'll give them a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread, they will go quietly away!' 'Give them only bread and wine,' shrieked Madame, echoed by Monsieur; 'they shall have all they

require, only let our lives be spared;' and Monsieur ran off to his hidden store (of whose existence I was aware), produced a couple of bottles of good wine and two large loaves of bread. The poor corporal's eyes brightened, as he took them. 'Tell Madame,' he said, 'we have not eaten since daybreak yesterday. Good night, and many thanks. Schlafen Sie wohl (may you sleep well)!' and he bowed himself out and closed the door. Madame gave a groan of relief, and observed, 'What do we not owe you! We should all have been murdered and pillaged had it not been for you!'

The story the soldiers told us was a strange one. It was not probable they could hear news of their lost regiment in a French house at four in the morning. I think they wanted lodging and supper, but finding that without trouble and offending English ladies they could not obtain them, they gladly accepted the peace-offering I

suggested, and slept in the market-place. However, all parties were mutually satisfied with the arrangement, and at last we were allowed to rest in quiet. Day was beginning to dawn, and we slept soundly, till at eight Madame came to awake her daughter and bring us coffee. We then went back to our original quarters, and found them all in despair. There was no bread! The army that had passed the day before had carried off all that had been baked, and all that the flour in Grand Pré could make. Carts with flour had come in and bread was being made, but a sentinel was placed in every baker's shop, and every loaf was to be kept for the troops as they passed through on their way to the front. All that long day (August 31) they were pressed on, regardless of fatigue and heat, regiment after regiment passing through at intervals, and it was evident no bread could be had.

One of the Prussian soldiers of our escort

told me that if I could get an order from the General in command I could get some bread, so I started off with him to find that official. Just over a bridge that crossed a very small stream and up a road to the left we met three officers, one of whom, my soldier said, was the General himself. It was no time to hesitate or wait for an introduction. I stopped the great man and requested an order for bread. He was most kind and much amused. He asked, 'Did I know a good baker?' Fortunately I had tried in vain at the family baker of the chemist, and found him a very respectable man, with two sacks of good flour, and a Prussian sentinel watching him. I therefore said I did know a very worthy baker. The General offered to accompany me, and we turned back together. We had to pass our head-quarters, and great was the astonishment of some of the party who were lounging in the garden to see me parading with an illustrious General and two or three aides-de-camp behind.

We arrived at the baker's, and a knot of women, congregated about the door, took to flight. The neighbourhood expected the instant execution of the baker, and the poor man himself shivered with fright as the General, stooping his tall form, just kept his spiked helmet clear of the doorway, and requested the baker in very good French to tell him how long it would be before the bread was baked. The baker said, 'As fast as he could;' and the General turning to me asked for how many persons I claimed bread. I said boldly 'twenty.' I knew anybody would be glad to have it, and it would, according to the system of 'requisitions,' cost nothing. The General then quietly turning to the sentinel said, 'When this soldier comes (pointing to my orderly) let him have twenty large loaves of bread.' Of course I thanked my friend, and he bowed himself out, his spurs and boots creating fresh consternation in the minds of the inhabitants of the neighbour-

hood, and my baker looking aghast. Requisitions meant payment by a ruined town after the war, and I hastened to disperse the cloud on his rosy face, which shone brightly through the flour, by dismissing the orderly with orders to return when the bread was ready, and then paying my friend beforehand for his bread, assuring him England came to help, not to oppress.

After telling our host at the head-quarters house that bread would be shortly forthcoming, Louise and myself went back to our quarters, where we were obliged to make our appearance at intervals, and console Madame G——. Here we found some people lamenting over the distresses caused by a Prussian invasion in a large and solitary house just across the bridge and out of the main street, and begging us to go and see the lady who lived there. We went off accordingly, and soon arrived. The house was a very good one, belonging to a large brewery, and cer-

tainly it was a scene of the utmost desolation. The stables were empty, the horses had been taken by the Germans, the plants in the garden torn up and trampled down, and inside it was worse. Not a piece of furniture remained unbroken, except in the room of the unfortunate mistress, who lived there with her son. The poor servants showed us the kitchen. Every utensil that could be useful—pots, pans, gridirons and frying-pans, knives and forks—had been carried off; chairs and tables cut to pieces in mere wantonness. Some of the officials—for over 180 officers and men had slept there—had taken possession of the bed-rooms upstairs, and in the morning had cut the mattresses and sheets to pieces and carried off the blankets.

The son begged us to go in and see his mother. The poor woman was in bed, but welcomed us as friends. All her 'household goods' lay broken and strewn about the room, and she herself, always an invalid from heart

attacks, was in a pitiable condition. The son was half broken-hearted, half indignant; he had applied in vain to the Mayor to represent to the Commandants de Place the unnecessary ravages committed by the German soldiers. We gave all we could of the sincerest sympathy, and begged him to indulge us with a glass of beer. He took it as we meant it, as a high compliment, and from a hidden cellar produced a bottle of beer of his own brewing, and of excellent quality. He offered to give us as much as we liked to carry away with us, and only regretted we had not passed the preceding night there, to be a help and comfort to his poor mother. All things considered, perhaps we were as well with Madame G——. However disturbed our repose was, it could not have been as bad as with 180 reckless soldiery wrecking and ruining the quiet home of the poor brewer.

We returned to Madame G—— for our dinner-breakfast, and on our way we strolled

on to the platform by the church. The view was lovely, though it wanted the quiet, dreamy charm of the night before, and coming back down the very same street we had descended with the priest, we passed a group of women gossiping together, and were amused by seeing one of them turn suddenly, silence her companions, and point to us, when she thought she was unobserved, saying, 'Look, look! the English ladies who saved the house of Madame G——.' After breakfast, we went to head-quarters; no message had come for us. yet a low, dull sound like distant thunder was heard, and many said it was the firing of heavy artillery.

Our host and his son offered to accompany us to what seemed to be the public promenade of Grand Pré. There was an old castle, now used as stables and farmhouses, and through the central court-yard we emerged on a raised platform overlooking the country for miles. This platform was simply the higher ground

on the north side of the castle, but on the east, where it overlooked the plain below, was bounded by a low wall, and the steep bank sloped sharply down to the Route impériale which led through Beaumont and Douzy to Sedan. The platform and the fields on the same level, extending westwards, were cultivated as corn-fields. The corn was quite ripe, had been cut, and lay in shocks about the field. It was a glorious autumn day. The open country below was bathed in a flood of sunlight. The tall poplars, in a double row, marked where the road went, and as far as the eye could see it was blocked by the long, long train of waggons and columns of soldiers.

As they passed below us we could hear the talking of the drivers to each other, and their German oaths as they urged on their tired beasts. We loitered on the platform for an hour, conversing with our host, the Mayor, and several other citizens, doubtless of 'honour and renown.' Everyone had a different story to

tell of what was passing beyond the low grass-covered hills that, in the distance, bounded the view; but no sound of war could be heard, just then no rising smoke clouded the deep blue of the sky. The view was exquisitely sunny and dreamy, and softened down in a golden mist, like some lovely Claude unspoiled by the fading of the long years since it came, in all its freshness, from the great master's easel. The Mayor was an individual of some forty years of age; he looked robust enough to endure the hardships of the present times, but he was quite broken down by billets for lodging, requisitions for forage, and the difficulty of procuring flour. He at present was cheerful. The Prussians had all gone on to the front, the flour carts had come in, and his Worship, in a buff alpaca coat, white trousers, and a straw hat, was enjoying his cigar in well-earned repose. He expressed himself graciously delighted to have such worthy assistants as ourselves (Louise and myself)

in keeping the peace of the town, and assured us he was of opinion that all the soldiers had gone forward, and we should have a quiet night. We returned to head-quarters, and promised our host that we would only go and see Madame G—— and come back.

We went down the street, and were just entering the market-place when a scared maid-servant met us and implored us to go down and get the Prussians out of the brewery. They were there again, and her mistress had sent for us; but as we looked round the market-place we found it crowded with Prussians and Bavarians. Two regiments over 1,000 strong had come in, and there was nothing to eat in the town! The situation was difficult. We knew the soldiers would search every hole and corner for bread and wine and meat, and finding none would grow violent. To add to the excitement, a messenger came hurrying in to say the Prussians had entered a little village about

two miles off, and finding nothing to eat or drink had set fire to it. Our host's son, with a very white face, came up to us and told us it was all true; the smoke and flames were already visible. We crossed the market-place as quietly as possible. Madame G—— had double-locked the door and put up the shutters, but on our knocking and calling out who we were let us in. Things were looking black, and Louise and I went upstairs to watch the scene below, and saw the two officers in charge sitting on their horses, as bewildered as anyone what to do. An idea struck us how, at all events, to secure the safety of Madame G——'s house, and we ran down and proposed to Madame G—— to invite the two officers to supper and a bed-room. I said there was bread and wine and soup in the house, and we had a goose they could roast (one of the Admiral's). Madame was weeping, and said, 'How could they roast a goose?' I replied, 'The baker next door will

bake it,' and Madame saw the difficulty overcome, and implored me to go and get the officers and the goose. Louise volunteered to keep the door against all comers, and off I went, and with the politest air possible presented the compliments of M. and Mde. G——, very worthy citizens, and would the noble commanders accept a very good bed-room and such a supper as the reduced state of Grand Pré enabled M. and Mde. G—— to offer? The Bavarian officer instantly dismounted, and in very pretty French begged his best thanks for so much kindness and hospitality. 'Might his friend accompany him?' 'Most certainly.' 'Might he immediately offer his thanks to Monsieur and Madame?' Also 'Most certainly. Would he follow me?' He did so, and I presented him to Mde. G——, who was uncertain what her fate was to be, shooting or hanging. He thanked her most courteously, and said as soon as he had attended to the wants of his men he would present himself for supper.

Madame brightened up, and I asked if he would kindly write on the door that the house was taken up as Commandants' quarters so that no one might occupy their bed-room. A piece of white chalk was procured, certain cabalistic signs scribbled on the door, and our friend bowed himself off, saying, 'Au revoir,' whilst Madame, exclaiming 'We are saved,' became on hospitable cares intent, and recovered all her cheerfulness. Louise stayed to assist her, and I went off to head-quarters to fetch the goose.

The rest of our party, by the way, were living sumptuously on the remains of the King's provisions. The worthy chemist suggested, if I took the goose through the streets, the hungry Prussians would seize it; so I threw a blanket over my arm, hid the goose in it, and sallied out again. As I crossed the market-place I was stopped by some thirty or forty Prussian soldiers. One of them advanced as spokesman for the rest.

He was a stern little man, in spectacles, with a very decided manner. He said in very good French, 'Madame, you are English. Have the goodness to explain to the deluded people of this town that we must have bread.' His manner was studiously courteous, but I hugged my goose close as I answered with equal courtesy, 'Monsieur, I regret it, but there is no flour in the town.' 'Madame, look around you. It is not a thing to be believed, that in a town with so many good houses there is no bread. Tell me not so!' 'Monsieur, it is unbelievable, but true. The army this morning took all the bread with them.' 'Madame, I regret to say it, but we have not eaten for twenty-four hours; we are very ferocious. If there is no bread in half an hour, you will be all hanged upon the lamp-posts.' 'Monsieur, I shall regret it very much; but that even will not bake bread without flour.' The little man burst out laughing, and then sighed and said, 'I am very

hungry. Oh that I were back in London with my dear violin.' A memory of his face dawned upon me. 'Is it possible,' I said; 'are you from London?' 'Yes, Madame; do you not remember me? I am E. P——.' What visions of concerts and concertos floated before me. How I wished I could ask him to supper; but the goose was a small one, and he had hungry friends. We took an affectionate leave, and I earnestly hope he found some bread.

On I went, when a breathless man stopped me, one of the officials I had seen on the platform of the castle. 'Oh, Madame, we are lost; there are a thousand more troops arrived, and the Mayor is perfectly disorganised.' 'Then, Monsieur,' I said, 'let him go and organise himself as fast as possible.' 'Très-bien, Madame! but there are no quarters left. Where is he to lodge the men? They will not sleep in the street.' 'Eh bien, Monsieur, there are two or three hundred beds in the church;

put some of them there.' 'Madame, it is a magnificent idea, only they cannot cook their suppers in the church!' 'Then, Monsieur, light a great fire outside and lend them the corporation kettle' (le marmiton de la Mairie). 'That goes well, Madame. A thousand thanks. I will go to the Mayor.' And he ran off. The effect of the advice was seen in the arrival of the Mayor in the market-place, in a black velvet coat, black waistcoat and trowsers, and black wide-awake, imploring his fellow citizens to be brave, and above all, as he said, 'Soyez tranquilles, mes enfants,' evidences of imperfect re-organisation. At last I arrived safely with my burden. We were all courageous and cheerful now, our shutters were down, our front door open. Monsieur was lounging on the door-step. We were the Commandants' head-quarters, and no soldier dare invade those sacred precincts. Madame, leaving Louise to see that all went well with the goose, and assured

that I would remain at the front door, departed herself to visit various friends in the neighbourhood, and relate her good fortune and the safety of the house. Long before she returned, sundry maid-servants arrived, bringing messages from their mistresses. Could the English ladies find them an officer? It would be such a comfort. We were obliged to remonstrate that officers were not plentiful, and we could not find any more; but one persevering maiden returned to the charge, saying, 'If not possible, Madame, to find an officer, could we not have an officer's servant?' whilst another withdrew, murmuring, with upraised hands and eyes, against the injustice of fate. 'Think, then, of two whole colonels for Madame G——, and not even a corporal for us!' I must confess it was a monopoly; but what was to be done? The friends would not be parted.

There were only two officers in charge of

all the men, 'traînards' from the main body, probably, and we could not afford to part with them. About seven o'clock they came in. Supper was ready, the soup was good, and so was the wine, the bouillon, and vegetables, and above all, the goose, was a great success. With the light-heartedness of the French, Monsieur, Madame, and their pretty little daughter, finding the officers most pleasant, entered into the spirit of the scene. We all drank wine together and touched glasses, and how the poor fellows ate, and then laughingly apologised, by saying that, except a few raw vegetables, they had had nothing for twenty-four hours. They were most grateful for a good supper and a kindly welcome, and we all passed two or three very merry hours; the last for many days. At last we wished each other good night. The Bavarian, as spokesman, begged his warmest thanks, not only to good M. and Madame G——, but to ourselves, who had procured him so charming

an evening. I really hope and believe Madame G—— slept that night, secure in the presence of the two Germans. Nor must I forget to add, that before the supper ended the Commanders' servant arrived with the leg of mutton he had received as rations, which was left behind for the use of the house; and furthermore, the servant was induced to accept a bed next door, where he acted as guard to a frightened family. At five next morning they were off. They just knocked at our door and called out a kind good-bye, and before we were fairly awake for the day they were miles away from their night's quarters.

CHAPTER X.

ALONE ON THE HILLS.

THERE never was a brighter summer morning than that 1st of September, a day that will not be forgotten in the history of the world. From that miserable day may be dated the unbroken cloud of misfortune and treason that crushed the hopes of France, and left her alone and despairing to struggle against a resistless foe. Yet only twenty miles from that great battle-field around Sedan all was as quiet and sleepy as if it had been in some out-of-the-way provincial town of England. The troops had gone on. The provision difficulties were ended, and Grand Pré was just the sort of sunny, idle town at seeing which

one would have wondered how the inhabitants kept themselves awake, not to say amused. There was a low, distant grumble in the air, but no cloud in the blue sky. 'They are fighting in front,' we said, as we sipped our morning coffee; but we did not dream how an empire was being lost, still less of the awful misery that day would entail on the fairest provinces of France. And only twenty miles away! Only the distance of Richmond from London, not half an hour by express train. What a contrast between the strife and agony in front and the calm repose of twenty miles behind.

After breakfast we walked round the town, and seeing a lovely creeper in a court-yard, ventured to enter and look at it. A lady, perceiving us, came forward to welcome us, and asked us to come in and see the view. Like many others, her beautiful house and garden had suffered from foreign occupation. She begged us to go and stay with her as long as

we liked; indeed, we had so many invitations at Grand Pré that we might have lived there at free quarters during the war. About noon I went to see the lady at the brewery. The Prussians had left, and, thanks to everything having been wrecked and ruined the day before, they had not suffered much additional damage.

As I was returning I met Louise, coming to tell me the General had sent a Bavarian officer to order us to go on directly to Beaumont. He had asked me, before he left Grand Pré, how long we should take, after receiving an order, before we could start. I replied, I thought, with no packing to do, one hour ought to be enough, and of this I had duly warned the rest. Louise and myself instantly gave the news at head-quarters. It was half-past twelve; I ordered the start for half-past one. The drivers and German escort had had their noon-day meal. I paid off all scores, bought some forage, and they promised us everything

should be ready at the time appointed. Louise and I returned, and our kind hostess, heart-broken at our departure, yet contrived to give us a charming little breakfast, and at a quarter past one we arrived at head-quarters. The waggons were packed, the horses harnessed, the drivers ready, and the Prussian soldiers in their light carriage, prepared to go off instantly; but that was all! The rest of the party were invisible, and, to my horror, I found them only just beginning an elaborate dinner. I spoke of the necessity of obeying the orders we had received, and enunciated the magnificent sentiment, 'Duty before dinner,' and then went out to see to the packing of our little baggages.

I was followed by the Knight of St. John, who had passed his time in bed, except at the hours of dinner. He asked me if we really were going forward. I said, 'Yes, directly, by order from our commander, the General.' He said we should not go forward; it was dan-

gerous, it was useless, and the stores must remain behind. I said I was not under his orders, and the stores were in charge of the General, who had left them in my care, and both ourselves and them should go on. Just then out came Louise. I hastily explained, and implored her to get the rest of the party to leave their dinner and come away. She saw the necessity, and hurried back. Meantime the Baron grew violent, and declared all the waggons were his. I denied it. He then claimed the soldiers' cart as his, and ordered the soldiers to turn out our light baggage and take the stores; they must go back to the depôt at Pont-à-Mousson. And then he went back to his dinner.

Louise came out. Her efforts had been vain, and she gallantly said, 'Let us go on with the stores, and let the others follow;' and so it was settled. The Prussian soldiers declared they would go. It was a lonely, dangerous road, and they would not leave us, and I promised them

ten francs each when we arrived at Beaumont, where the General was quartered for the day. Then I went back with Louise and told the rest what had happened, that there was opposition made to our leaving, and implored them to come away. There was not a Prussian soldier in the town except our two guards and the old Baron, and the Bavarian officer. We two could manage them; but troops might come in at any moment, and the Baron would seize the stores, and they would be sent back to swell the collection of goods in the depôt at Pont-à-Mousson for Prussian use alone. All in vain; so I left a paper with the route, and ordered a rendezvous at Sommeurthe, six miles short of Beaumont, knowing that with no baggage they might possibly get there first, and then went out. The Baron rushed after me, perfectly furious. He ordered the soldiers to stay behind, and, doubling his fist at me, threatened vague punishments, if I dared to take away the baggage. I said I was resolved, and he turned

into the house, not believing we could go alone with five hundred pounds worth of stores over twenty miles of lonely road. The soldiers were very grieved, but they could but obey orders, and they helped us to transfer the light baggage to our waggons. We ordered one to remain to bring on the rest of the party, under escort of the Bavarian officer and a troop of dragoons, whom he was instantly expecting; and then, taking a cordial farewell of all who had been so kind to us, we told the first two waggons to move on, and, mounting on the third, took the road to Buzancy, the first village between Grand Pré and Beaumont.

It was just two o'clock when we got off—two English ladies and three Alsace drivers speaking only German. The country we had to traverse was on the outskirts of the great battle-fields. Camp-followers and traînards, or, as we call them, lingerers, infesting it. And the chance of getting somewhere between the

contending parties, or finding ourselves in the line of fire of some battery of artillery, was also not a remote one. If, as we wound slowly up the road leading out of Grand Pré, our hearts half failed us, it was not fear, but a sense of the heavy responsibility thus laid upon us. It was our duty to obey orders; it was our duty to save the stores for those who might so sadly need them. But in fulfilling that duty we never for one moment doubted that, in the hour of anxiety and danger, we should not be 'Alone upon the hills.' So on we went till Louise, seeing we were going due east, remembered that we ought to go due north, and we had no map with us. We stopped a peasant boy and found we were going straight to Verdun, and must retrace our road almost to Grand Pré. Having been nearly an hour coming thus far, we were not inclined to do this if we could avoid it, and he suggested a cross-road which would bring us to Buzancy, where we could rejoin the

main road. At a farmhouse on the rising ground beyond we should probably find a man to direct us. We turned off accordingly, and as we traversed the high ground, and looked back on the little town where we had passed those long two days, we congratulated ourselves that there we had protected and comforted four poor, frightened, oppressed people; but no foreshadowing came to us on that autumn afternoon with its golden sunshine of the dreary winter days when it should be given to us alone again, with only God and our own English courage, to keep, to protect, and comfort four hundred helpless beings committed by Him to our care.

So on we went, so slowly that we had perpetually to get down and urge our driver on. Travelling in times like these is not very safe, and it was better to keep together. The utter loneliness was something appalling; not a bird flew across our path, no sound of life except the slow grating of our broad wheels

on the dusty road and our continual cry, 'Forward!' It was very hot, a blinding sunshine, no shade of trees, only low hedges and scattered orchards. In the distance a few cottages but no living being visible, yet what sound of war and tumult might suddenly break that strange silence no one could predict. On we went up a long white road, and then we came to the highest level of the rising ground, and looked to our left over a vast expanse of champaign country, with blue hills and woods in the distance. The meadows were fresh and green, the trees just stirred their branches to the slight summer breeze, but down below were long lines of dark figures; they changed places every now and then, and here and there were little tiny black dots, that seemed to explode in a puff of white smoke that went up slowly, to linger against the blue sky before it dispersed. Beyond were heavier white clouds of smoke and a dull echo on the air. The little black dots were skirmishers, and the

long lines troops in order of battle; the smoke came from cannon and rifle, but the golden sunshine threw a halo over all and softened down the distant outlines, and that was our view of the great battle around Sedan. 'They are fighting down there,' we said, and we turned off the hill road and descended to the valley, and became intensely interested in the finding of some intelligent peasant to guide us to Buzancy, for to us the battle was ended.

A battle is very pretty ten miles off, very exciting on the spot, very dreadful when it is ended, and all that is left of the strife and the defeat and the victory is the agony on the battle-field of those lying there, moaning for help, and, even worse still, the cottages crowded with sufferers, the stables and barns full of groaning men, no beds, no light through the night; too often no bread, no water, no wine, and all help insufficient for the time. How they listen for the Ambulance carts coming to take them to some house where assist-

ance and nursing can be found. How many crawl away into some low shrubbery or wood or amongst the long, cool grass, and days after are found dead, not from wounds, but weakness and starvation. With all our improved means of helping the wounded, this is too often the case. But the summer is so merciful compared to winter, when the snow buries dead and dying alike, and a white heap, a little higher than the white field around, is all the guide to find some poor fellow gone beyond all human help. This had not been realised to us as we halted in the village and looked for some one to guide us in vain. We were half inclined to laugh at our predicament. I started off and thundered at several doors; still in vain. At last I spied an individual peeping round a corner, and dashed at him. Finding it was not an Uhlan, he ventured forth, and, on being offered a consideration, consented to guide us to Buzancy. He mounted by our driver, and we tried to get some

information from him; but if he ever had possessed any wits they had been all frightened out of his head, for beyond saying everybody in the village had run away and he was alone there, and shrieking 'right' and 'left' to our drivers (the German for which we taught him), nothing could we get out of him. He was evidently bent on escaping at the first possible moment, and as soon as we had ascended another hill, and he caught sight of a church spire, he gave a sigh of relief, said 'Voilà Buzancy!' jumped off, hardly waiting for his fee, and became invisible.

Our drivers were not inclined to stop at Buzancy, even to rest their horses. Our private opinion was they were terribly frightened, and inclined to keep as far from the scene of action as possible. But as we insisted on going on and as every mile we went we were coming nearer, it became a great point with them to go as slowly as possible, whilst with us it was to get to our journey's

end before dark. This unfortunate difference of opinion caused a great deal of trouble, and we bitterly regretted not having a little revolver. We had no intention of shooting ourselves by firing it off; but it has always an effective appearance, and they would not have known it was not loaded. Evening began to close in and not one of us had the least idea of where we were. The horse in our waggon began to go on in an eccentric way, stopping suddenly and pulling all to the right, and we speculated how much further he would go, and what we should do if he dropped dead; but the solution of the difficulty being too much for us, we left it alone, and contented ourselves with hoping he would not drop dead. And so hours passed away. At last we saw a group of dirty-looking soldiers assembled round a broken waggon. They were camp-followers, and we feared that they would seize one of our waggons to go on their way with. I spoke of this to our drivers, and implored

them to get on. They would hear nothing. A desperate remedy was needed, and looking suddenly to the left, and pointing to a clump of trees, I cried out, 'The French, the French; we shall be all made prisoners.' Louise aided in the outcry, our driver got frightened, the others caught the alarm, and they actually lashed their horses into a gallop past the suspicious party. It was so quickly done that they had no time to stop us, even had they been so inclined. At all events we avoided troublesome questions and demands, and we rushed on down a long hill and fairly out of their sight. Below us in a valley lay the village of Sommeurthe. How glad we were to see the lights that showed the place was in military occupation! Anything was better than the darkness of night on those lonely hills. The road was a sharp descent cut in a hill-side and going round a corner, a low bank on the right hand, and a very steep slope down to the little stream that ran through the valley on the left.

Just as we began to descend, our horse made a dead stop, and then staggered. It was all over with him, for the time at least, and the driver was compelled to unharness him, and tie him up behind. The waggon was thus left with one horse only attached to the pole. The driver walked and fell behind to speak to one of the other drivers, who had lingered, and our horse naturally pulled to the left. I called to the driver. He was lighting his pipe, and before he could reach the horse's head to turn it round the waggon was over the side, and going slanting down the slope. How we escaped I know not, except that the wheel caught against a large stone, and the earth being soft, the downward progress of the waggon was checked, and it came to a standstill. The heavy chests would have overbalanced it in another moment, and I saw them swerving over. I was on the right-hand side, and sprung out, Louise followed instantly; but the escape was a miracle,

and so we felt it. Half-way down an angle of forty-five, with a stream below, and heavy boxes bringing the vehicle head over heels, is a most unpleasant position. We recovered our coolness sooner than the drivers, who yelled and chattered like monkeys, and at last the horse and waggon were turned up the bank, and what to do was the question. We could have gone on in either of the other two waggons, but to leave the one we were in behind was impossible. Very valuable stores were in it, so we decided it should go at a foot pace (all it could) ahead of us, and one of us mounted each of the other two waggons as guard, for darkness was closing in.

Our progress was slow, but happily down-hill, and most thankful were we to enter the village street. I saw a gentleman in a white cap run out into the centre of the street, and call to several others to come and meet us, and I cried out to Louise in delight, 'Here is Mr. W——' (he, too, had always worn a white cap).

One of the gentlemen stopped the waggon, and the supposed Mr. W——, in the white cap came up and held out his arms to catch me as I jumped off my throne of hay, saying, 'I am so glad to see you. I had just sent out a patrol of carbineers to look for you. It is so dangerous on those hills.' The tone was foreign, the gentleman spoke in French, and looking up I saw it was not Mr. W——. We did not explain our mistake, but we did our misfortunes. Another of the party was speaking to Louise, and asked, 'Were you not afraid?' 'Not at all,' she said; 'we are English.' He laughed and said he had lived many years in England, and had been a merchant at Liverpool. He added, 'That gentleman with your friend is the Prince of Tours and Taxis. We heard from some of your party, who passed through an hour or two ago, that you were on your way, and His Highness was so anxious that he ordered out a guard to search for you.' The Prince then

told us the rest had gone on, hearing the General was at Beaumont. Of course we were vexed. They had been ordered to wait at Sommeurthe for us, and had they done so we too could have gone on; as it was, it was impossible. There was not a horse to be had, and the Prince suggested it was so dark and late we should lose nothing by waiting till the morning, and making an early start of it. By that time he would find us a horse, and he would also try for quarters for us. I believe he gave us up his own room in a small house, and slept in his carriage. Nothing could exceed his kindness. He came up with us, to show us the way, apologised for the rough accommodation, and explained that he and all his friends had had no meat that day, which must plead his excuse for not asking us to supper. Little could be spared from the wounded, who were coming in fast; but a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine he could give us, and would we give back what we did not require ?

We deposited our hand-bags, and went out to see our stores safe, the Englishman, as we called him, with us. Whilst returning we were stopped by the Prince. He pointed to the church close by, saying, 'That church is full of wounded, and we have *nothing*, literally nothing. Can you not give us something? Lint, medicines, extract of meat, anything.' Now, we had been ordered to bring on the stores untouched, but in a case like this to refuse would have been heartless. I said if the Prince and some of his men would help me to open and afterwards nail down some of the store chests, I would give all I dared. He gladly consented, and we mounted the waggons; the Prince going hard to work himself. We got out lint, cotton wool, and a quantity of Liebig. They were most gratefully accepted. The village was utterly destitute, and no help at hand; our arrival was most timely. The Prince bade us a kind good-night, saying he had ordered the Englishman to escort us to Beaumont at 6 A.M. next

morning, and we promised that more stores should be sent back by him the instant we could communicate with our chief. We went off to our little room, had our supper of bread and wine, and slept soundly till some of the people of the house awoke us at daybreak. They were very sorry they had no coffee or milk to give us, so we took a piece of bread each and a little wine, gave back the rest, and with many thanks departed. Our escort was waiting for us, the waggons ready, and at half-past five we drove slowly out of Sommeurthe on our way to Beaumont.

One painful scene we had witnessed at Sommeurthe was still present to our minds. As we were unpacking the chests the night before, we saw led through the village street as prisoners a man and woman, their hands tied behind them. They had been found on the battle-field that afternoon cutting off the finger of a dead officer to get his ring, and we knew their doom was certain. That

bright morning a grave, hurriedly dug by the roadside and hastily filled in, was all that was left of two who, the night before, had been human beings in full health and strength. Such scenes were too common. At Conny we had seen a man with his clothes half torn off his back led struggling and shrieking down the street. He was a spy, and his fate was sure. In both cases it was deserved; but in all such sudden and terrible punishments there is something revolting to our feelings of mercy and the gentle doctrine of pity and forbearance which we profess to believe in and practise. War puts aside, and perhaps by necessity, all such considerations, but it is not the less sad and deplorable.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAST HOURS OF THE EMPIRE.

THE morning air was fresh and cool as we drove out of Sommeurthe to reach Beaumont. The sun had hardly risen, and the dew was still hanging on the branches of the trees. The road was utterly lonely, and as we went slowly along we saw a dark object on it. The driver of the first waggon dismounted and picked it up. I looked at it in utter astonishment. It was my waterproof cloak, which had been left in the waggon that conveyed the rest of the party, had fallen out, and remained ever since seven o' clock the evening before just where it fell. Can anything give a clearer idea of the desertion

of a high road by all ordinary traffic? I reclaimed my property, not much damaged by the muddy road and the night dews, and we drove on. Our kind escort knew nothing of the battle said to have been fought the day before, nor where the French were. A crushing defeat of MacMahon's army was spoken of, and wounded had come in in large numbers; but the state of ignorance and confusion of mind prevailing in all who are near a battle is a singular fact. Every man knows isolated incidents of his own corps or brigade; but no one can give a general idea of the affair. I doubt if even the General in command knows much about it. Perhaps he pieces together the reports of his officers; but it must be as impossible for him as for any one else to have the battle-field and every manœuvre upon it spread before his eyes like a map. A white mist hid the distance, and so we journeyed quietly on, speaking of England, till we entered Beaumont, passed

down a road with orchards each side, enclosed by walls, crossed a little stream by an old stone bridge, turned into the main street of the town, and almost directly afterwards into the central square, Grande Place, or whatever it was called.

What a scene of confusion was there! Provision and ammunition waggons, Ambulance carts, mixed up, together with troopers, some on horseback, some dismounted, men of all regiments pushing here and there, and heaps of straw round the church in the centre of the Place, on which lay men in every stage of suffering from wounds—German and French side by side. The church was full, and even the side streets had wounded lying on the door-steps. Where to find our friends was the question. A Prussian officer who rode up was accosted by our friend, and informed us they had found quarters in the Mayor's house, just down a by-street, and there we accordingly

went. A Frenchwoman came out to receive us, exclaiming how anxiously we had been looked for. Her husband ran upstairs, and in another moment Mr. A—— came down with a hearty welcome. They had been very uneasy about us, and sent out a patrol to look for us; but the General had consoled the party by observing he should have been dreadfully alarmed in any other case, but as it was Miss Pearson and Miss M'Laughlin he was quite sure they could take care of themselves, and the baggage and they would be at Beaumont early in the morning. And there we were by half-past six, with the stores all safe, feeling very proud of our successful effort to save them. God helps those who help themselves, and in times like these personal considerations must be put aside. The duty imposed on those who have any charge committed to them must be done, and to fail in doing it is better than not to try under every difficulty to carry it out. Besides, dangers and hin-

drances that look so vast at a distance vanish into nothing as they approach. A little more fatigue, a little more suspense, a few more anxious throbbings of the heart, and a stern resolution that come what may the duty shall be done, and difficulties vanish like frost in sunshine, and the struggle is over, the battle won.

We dismounted—for getting out of a carriage it could not be called, to get off a heap of hay—and entered the house. There was a general effect of confusion and wounded men. Almost directly afterwards the General came down, congratulated us most enthusiastically on our success and pointed out its result—that we had brought on help where it was most terribly needed; and where, owing to the difficulties of the way, none had yet come. That word 'difficulty!' It is too often an excuse for leaving undone a tiresome task. Perhaps we were unconscious then, as we certainly were afterwards, of the danger

we had incurred. The General, the Prince of Tours and Taxis, our escort, the Englishman, all seemed to know it. But except heat, weariness, and nearly being tumbled over a precipice, we had seen none. I believe both of us had a singular unconsciousness of peril, which blinded us to it, and certainly saved us many painful hours. We got what breakfast we could—some bread and coffee; whilst Mr. A—— and the General occupied themselves in finding fresh horses for us, for they said we must press on to the front.

Whilst trying to boil some water for our coffee a priest entered, and begged us to dress the wounds of some men lying in a house hard by, whom no one had yet attended to. We went with him, and entering a small room found it full of wounded. We did what we could for them, and first got some water. We unfastened their stocks, and washed the blood and dust from their faces and throats. They were lying on straw, and

therefore to undress them was useless; but we took off their coats laid them over them, and dressed their wounds. One poor fellow was in such a state that I saw he was beyond our help, and begged the poor woman of the house to fetch a surgeon. She returned with one belonging to a French Ambulance; he examined the poor man's leg. It was shot through by a ball, the bone broken, and the wound already gangrened. The surgeon spoke most kindly to him of the necessity of immediate amputation; he refused to have his leg cut off, and the surgeon said very quietly and gravely, 'Then, my poor lad, you have but twenty-four hours to live. I leave you for half an hour, and I shall return for your answer.' We dressed them all and went back to the house.

There were so many wounded in Beaumont, and such urgent need of help, that, had we not been bound to get to head-quarters as fast as possible, we should have stayed there.

Whilst we were all discussing matters two or three French surgeons arrived, one an elderly man, much decorated. The General received them most kindly. They told us that they had two Ambulances there, and that the Germans had taken away everything they had—instruments, medicines, all were gone—and they earnestly begged for help. Just at this instant in came several German surgeons to ask for everything, possible and impossible, and I pleaded the cause of the Prince and the promise I had made to send him back some stores. A large collection was put aside for him, and then we turned our attention to the wants of our present friends. Nothing could exceed the jealousy of the Germans at the idea of anything more being given to the French than to them, whilst we felt how badly the French Ambulances had been used, and how necessary it was to give them the largest assistance. The General said to me in a whisper, 'Tell me to put aside for your

immediate use on the battle-field a large quantity of things,' Louise and myself instantly began to claim our proportion, and considerably more. The General said, as there were two German Ambulances and two French Ambulances, four equal parcels must be made, and then one for us, and one reserved for the use of Mr. Parker, when he rejoined us. This was done, and the Germans were requested to give receipts for the various articles handed over to them. The French did the same. The General whispered to me, 'Tell the old French surgeon to stay behind the Germans, and to be very slow writing his receipts.' As I spoke to him he burst into tears as he told me of his wounded, without a single thing with which to nurse or dress them, and the nice stock of instruments and medicines which had been so carefully got together, and which were all taken away from his assistants and himself. A small cart came for the German lots, but the head surgeon was evidently suspicious and discontented.

Just after they left, we called to some French orderlies attending on their surgeon to add to their store the heaps nominally laid aside for us, and at that very instant the head German surgeon came back again, saying, 'I have only two parcels; I ought to have three.' 'Not at all,' said Mr. A——, who was trying to stand before the remaining piles; 'you have had three; that is more than your share.' 'How so?' asked the surgeon; 'I saw but two; I was to have one lot of things for myself.' 'So you had,' said Mr. A——; 'there were three lots put aside for you, only Mademoiselle here was so stupid she mixed up the three lots into two.' Mademoiselle tried to look guilty, and the German took himself off, evidently not at all satisfied as regards the two or three heaps. The gratitude of the poor French surgeon was beyond all bounds, and he took instant precautions to hide up his treasures where the Germans would not be likely to discover them.

All this business having been transacted, and the new horses for the waggons having been harnessed, we prepared to start. The poor horse whose failure the night before had nearly caused our topple over the high bank was shot, it being discovered he had glanders, and one other was tied behind our waggon, and so annoyed us by munching the hay which formed our seat, and thereby bumping us perpetually in the back, that we begged he might be transferred to some other waggon, where there were only store-chests to interfere with his amusements. The rest of the old lot of horses were left behind, and as the new horses were powerful French artillery ones, used to dragging heavy guns over open country, it was possible to go forward at a great pace, but where no one knew. To Sedan, the General said, for doubtless the French had retreated beyond it. Who could dream of the surrender of that splendid army, which was only the next morning to

become a sad reality and an everlasting stain on the page of French history?

The sun was still shining bright as we rattled out of Beaumont, the General and Mr. A—— on horseback, armed with long hunting-whips, which were afterwards very useful. As we went on the sky seemed to become clouded, a lurid haze to hang all about, and the brightness and beauty of a summer day to be gone. We were on a long, straight road, overlooking many miles of country. To the left, bodies of troops were moving about in the distance, and a thick cloud of smoke arose from a village some miles off, which we could just see; but our road was as lonely as usual. Presently, however, a cloud of dust rose before us, a gleam of red was visible in the midst, and the General, who was in front, rode back to us and said, 'Look out for the saddest sight you ever saw—French prisoners in thousands.' On they came, Prussian dragoons on either

side, four or five abreast. Every corps in the service was represented there—Artillery, Dragoons, Chasseurs, Zouaves, the Line, all unarmed, of course, and unwounded, tramping heavily to the rear, where the railroad waggons waited to take them away far from La Belle France to the Northern land, amongst strangers and enemies. They walked with a quiet and subdued air, but with a firm and steady step. They were not beaten men, as we knew afterwards. Conquered and betrayed, but still hopeful of some victory that should retrieve the loss of yesterday, they came on and on, till the heart was sick to see them. Twenty thousand passed us by as we halted, not to break the lines. Even their guards, soldiers themselves, seemed to feel for them, and allowed them to halt for rest, and spoke in softened tones to them. It was before the days of Gardes Mobiles and Francs-Tireurs; these were the flower of the armies of France—Crimean, Italian, and Chinese medals

on almost every man of that sad throng. It was a relief when they had passed and the cloud of dust hid their red kepis and trousers from sight. The General spoke to one of the officers in charge of them, who afterwards talked to us and told us we could not get into Sedan.

The Emperor was still there, and the place had not surrendered; but he thought we could get into the suburb of Balan, only we should have to pass through the burning village of Bazeilles, which was somewhat dangerous and very dreadful to see; but as there was no cross road, we could not avoid it, and so we went on our way to Douzy, the first village on our road to Sedan.

Just before we entered the village we had to cross a small stream by a wooden bridge. A party of cavalry were in the level water meadows below, guarding more prisoners, who were huddled together in long lines, trying to keep each other warm; for a cold wind was

blowing, and everything looked dreary and desolate. Just as we were crossing, a cry was heard, and we beheld the hindmost driver lamenting over the loss of the horse which had been tied up behind his waggon. He had been staring at the prisoners in the field, and some sharp Prussian soldiers had cut the cord and walked off with the beast. Now, as it had been 'required' by the Prussian Knights of St. John at Pont-à-Mousson a few days before, there was no occasion for his loud lamentations over his ruin and evil fortune.

Douzy looked utterly deserted; not a woman or child to be seen, only German soldiers and some French prisoners wandering idly about. As we halted in the main street a cry was raised; a number of chickens and ducks had been unearthed from a barn close by and were running wildly out. Captors and captives joined in a hunt, and picked up sticks to knock the poor birds down with. The scene was most absurd, but nothing could

relieve the oppressive weariness of Douzy. The grey sky, the dusty streets, the closely shut houses, the absence of all light or warmth of coloring, were most depressing. The Admiral had, as usual, collected a small crowd of German officers round him, but there were no civilians, male or female, to listen to his eloquence. The General spoke kindly to one or two French officers and took their addresses, that he might send news of them home to their friends. We did not then appreciate what a blessing such a trifling kindness might prove; but afterwards, when we saw the piteous appeals in the Belgian papers from dear friends and relations longing for news of those they hoped might be prisoners (not in the sad lists of the killed and missing), we realised how many a weary month of agonizing suspense was spared by that thoughtful act.

We were sitting in our waggons, watching the scene, when a German General came up and begged us to have some wine. An aide-

de-camp brought a bottle and some glasses, and when we had taken the wine we naturally gave back the glasses. 'Pray keep them,' said the aide-de-camp; 'they may be useful. Take anything you like; it is nobody's now, and may as well be yours.' It was a delightfully lawless sensation to go shopping with nothing to pay! to select whatever pleased us, with no consideration of the bill, to be sent in next Christmas. One felt like a comfortable high-way robber, sanctioned by the highest authority, and no forebodings of Newgate in the distance to cloud our perfect enjoyment of everybody's property except our own. Under the circumstances it was Spartan forbearance not to take a beautiful barouche (quite new) and a pair of splendid horses which the Prussian General pressed on our acceptance. He had found them, he said, in the château he had taken possession of (a large house close by). He really had no use for them, somebody would run off with them that evening,

he was sure, and really, we must be so tired of our very uncomfortable waggon, he must insist on our having a better conveyance; and he began to call to Fritz, and Wilhelm, and Johann to bring out the carriage and harness the horses. We were young campaigners then, and had a shred of conscience left, and we declined, but we were tempted to regret it many a day afterwards. The Prussian General's theory was right: somebody, no doubt, took the carriage and horses, and they probably are being driven 'Unter den Linden' now; whilst I trust that we should have had sufficient strength of mind and rectitude of principle to restore our 'voiture de luxe' after the war. Carriages and horses were great temptations where there were none, and we met a wandering omnibus the other day which had been 'required' in Mantes, had passed the winter in Orleans, and was going on to Paris. It may find its way back some day; but as it has been all repainted in white, with a Red Cross

on the side, I fear it will cost some trouble and expense to restore it to its pristine yellow. They were lawless times; I trust we shall never know such in England.

The General told us we must get on as fast as possible. Sedan had not surrendered, and there was an idea that a sortie on a huge scale would be tried. The suburb of Balan was occupied by the Bavarians, and there, he thought, we could find some sort of shelter for the night. He feared we should find getting through Bazeilles difficult, but not impossible, and that we must be prepared for sad scenes, for hardship, and even danger, such as we had not encountered; for we should have to go quite close to the walls of Sedan, and the guns might open fire at any time. All these possibilities had also struck us; but it was no time to turn back. We had no wish to do so, and only begged him to take us to the front as fast as possible, where our services would be

most useful and our stores most needed. We bade adieu to the German officers and the dreary village of Douzy, and at 2 P.M. clattered out upon the long, straight, and poplar bordered road that led direct to Bazeilles.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SADDEST SCENE OF ALL.

We left Douzy at 3 P.M. at a rapid pace, and went along the road, as regular and straight as is usual with all routes impériales that led to Bazeilles. Look in Murray, and you will find at page 648, route 180, the simple statement, 'Bazeilles, four miles' (from Sedan). 'At this village is or was the chateau where Turenne was nursed, and an avenue planted by him. Near here the Count de Soissons defeated the army of Richelieu, 1641, but perished on the field of battle.' That is all! But Murray must add a longer and sadder record now to his next edition. We may simply say that before the war it was a neat

and pretty town, with broad streets and white stone houses, very many standing apart in their gardens—the country residences of the wealthy shopkeepers and merchants of Sedan. It might be described as a 'very select town' of 1,200 inhabitants. It had its Mairie in the central place, a handsome building with a large entrance-door and many windows, and a balcony from which his Worship (if French mayors are so designated) had proclaimed the latest bulletins of 'His Imperial Majesty.' It had its neat little Hotel, and many good shops, and residences of weavers, very few cottages; in fact, it was 'a genteel suburb' of Sedan. On this quiet little town the scourge of war fell heaviest, and we saw it only a heap of blazing and blackened ruins. Even as we drove along, a heavy, thick smoke arose in the distance, a lurid mist seemed to hang over the open fields on either side, where small parties were busy digging shallow trenches here and there—the graves of the fallen soldiers.

We went on, the General and Mr. A—— lashing the horses with their long hunting-whips. Scattered bodies of troopers passed us every now and then, and waggons full of knapsacks and other equipments; but every moment was of importance, and we did not stay the full gallop of our horses for troopers or waggons. The great cases bumped as if they would break loose from their lashings. The drivers stared and muttered at the unusual pace. We held on by the sides till the gallop slackened, and the General, riding up to us, said, 'Don't look out; it is too bad for you to see.' We said, 'Better face the worst at once,' and he replied, 'Yes, you are right; look out, and nothing you'll ever see in Hospital will alarm you afterwards.' We did look out. Shall we ever forget the horror of that scene? A long street, every house burning, some smouldering, some blazing still; no human being there, but dreadful forms lying about the streets in attitudes of

pain and agony, their clothes still smoking, with clenched hands and upturned faces, the blood issuing from their mouths, showing how fearful their deaths must have been. All were Germans, and there were deep gashes on the throats of some that told a tale of revenge, and possibly murder, that had been done by no soldier's hand. The church and Mairie were only wrecks. The Mairie had been made into an Ambulance, but the flames had caught it. There was no one to help or save, and the floors had crashed in with their helpless occupants. Not one single house was left. Death and destruction reigned there, and the smell of burnt flesh lingered for many a long day with us, turning us sick at everything that bore the slightest resemblance to it.

On every side of us the fire had extended: up the main street, down the cross ones, smoke and flame, crashing ruins, and burning bodies. We feared the hay in our waggon

would catch, and tried to cover it up with rugs and our waterproof sheet. Sick, and faint, and smothered, we longed to be out of that terrible place; but the horses winced perpetually. With the noble instinct of their natures, they would not trample on the dead, and we were obliged to go slowly. It seemed hours before we reached the central Place, where there were ruin and death still around us; hours before we got out of that fearful town, and breathed a long, deep breath of pure air on the road beyond. But as we left the town one sad, touching thing we saw. A small cottage on the outskirts had escaped the flames, and there were wounded there, for a Red-Cross flag was hung out of its lattice window—only a coarse white handkerchief, the Cross traced on it in blood. Over all hung a deep cloud of sulphurous smoke, that in mercy hid from the country round the awful fate of Bazeilles.

How it all came about will, perhaps, be

never truly known. It was held by the Marine Infantry against the enemy, who, in this case, were aided by their own countrymen; for, mistaking their blue jackets and caps for Prussian uniforms, they were fired at by both sides, and lost as many by the balls of the French as they did by those of their foes. The village was twice taken and retaken by the Bavarians, and it is said that when the Germans were driven out the first time by the French the peasantry cut the throats of their wounded who had been left there, and that when it was retaken by the Germans they, in revenge, set fire to the town. Certainly it had been burned by hand. The houses stood separately, yet everyone was destroyed, even where it was impossible flames could catch from one to the other. Whether or not the popular tale is true no one will ever know. Others say a Bavarian trooper entered the place just after it was taken, asked an innkeeper for water for his horse, and was

told in no courteous terms to fetch it himself. That he seized a burning brand from the hearth and set fire to the house, and the mania of destruction spread like wildfire.

Why the Mairie should have been fired, with all the wounded in it, German as well as French, is a difficult question to solve. Military reports and popular rumours always differ, and both I believe to be equally worthy of credit. At least, we have found them so, and in this instance various accounts were given. There is some truth in all, but often mistakes; and certainly both French and German telegrams and reports were singular flights of fancy. Everyone said the only reliable news came from England, and the newspaper correspondents we met deserve every credit for their endeavours to be exact. They all had their own predilections, French or German, but all honestly endeavoured to give the best account of passing events, and the slight colouring of personal feeling may be easily forgiven.

We were too ill from the scene we had witnessed to care much about looking at the road we were travelling upon, and it was only when we came near a village we were told was Balan that we could rouse from the half-sick stupor which oppressed us. Here we encountered a number of Bavarian troops. As we entered the place we saw that we were indeed in the heart of the battle-field. Though the destruction had not been as complete as at Bazeilles, yet many houses had been demolished by shot and shell, and were only smoking ruins. Dead bodies lay about the street, and in one place were a carriage and pair of horses. A shell had struck them, and driver and horses lay dead; their blood splashed upon the wall, against which they had dashed in their last agony. The carriage, though overturned, was unharmed; of its occupant, if it ever had one, there was no trace. The road was strewed with articles from the houses around which had been pillaged; books,

china, and wearing apparel were thrown about. We saw a very pretty hood of white cashmere, trimmed with black velvet, lying on the ground beside where our carriage halted, and, as we admired it, a soldier picked it up and presented it to us. A great number of leaves of music books were also lying there. They were separate leaves, or rather cards, such as wind instruments have placed upon them when playing on the march. We had time to look at it all, as our chief was consulting with the Bavarian colonel what to do.

To go on into Sedan was impossible. It had not surrendered, and the only alternative was to take possession of one of the many sacked and deserted houses around us. There was one with a perfect roof, which was something, and with two or three loftier houses between it and the guns of Sedan, which was something more, and on this we decided; and the colonel ordered the Bavarian soldiers who were occupying it to clear out. It was

an original style, certainly, of 'taking a house.' Furnished lodgings it could not be called, for nothing was left except a mahogany bedstead, too cumbrous to carry off, some tables, and chairs. There were stables, still smouldering, but the drivers extinguished the last remnant of fire, and our horses and waggons were housed for the night. We tried to discover what sleeping accommodation we could find. The bed-rooms were in a dreadful state ; the floors littered a foot deep with the contents of all the closets and drawers, torn and cut up into pieces, linen, books, bonnets, dresses, papers, chimney ornaments, mixed up, so to speak, into one heterogeneous mass. The kitchen was worse; the dirt was inconceivable, and every utensil seemed to have been used for something it was never intended for.

To clear up and clean out was our first endeavour, and whilst doing so some of the party discovered a way through the garden to a château, next door, where the pillage had not

been quite so complete, and where we should have removed our whole establishment, except for two objections. First, it was too high, more exposed, if the guns on the ramparts had opened fire; and next, and most important of all, the poor master lay shot dead in the kitchen. He was a merchant of Sedan, it appeared. His wife and daughter had taken refuge there, but he remained to guard his property. The Bavarians arrived, loudly calling for wine; and, with the idea of saving his cellar, he gave them sour cider. They resented the insult by shooting him dead, and there he lay amidst the wrecks of all the kitchen had ever contained, with the fatal crimson marks on his breast that showed where the balls had entered. No burying party was at hand; nothing could be done but to cover decently his white upturned face, and leave him literally with his 'household gods shattered around him.'

Here, in this château, however, beds, blan-

kets, and a huge box of wax candles were found, some candelabra, and some cups and glasses. They were borrowed for the occasion, and transferred to our humbler residence next door, and we arranged our bed-rooms. Supper was now the question. The kitchen had been cleaned out and a fire lighted, but all our researches did not enable us to discover anything to eat. Liebig, however, supplied deficiencies, and some vegetables from the garden; but it was sad work to search for them. Amidst the lovely flowers near the house, and beyond in the kitchen garden, dead men lay, seeming asleep in the evening light. We got, however, a few potatoes, carrots, and salad, and I remarked particularly one patch of very fine green potato plants, promising a good crop, and we resolved next morning to begin there.

Night was closing in as we re-entered the house. Every door had been broken open by forcing in the pannels, and the shutters of one

of the lower rooms had also been broken away. In the one we selected, though the windows were gone, the shutters remained. We closed them, lighted the candles, and began our soup with a few pieces of bread left from our breakfast. Every moment we expected the much-talked-of sortie, and listened for the opening roar of the cannon planted on the walls so near us; but all was silent, except the challenge of the Bavarian sentinels, whose grand guard was next door, and tired and worn out, we were glad to lie down on the mattresses we had found, and slept as profoundly as if all the horrors around us were but a dream.

We were roused at some unearthly hour in the morning by a loud shout proceeding, as it appeared, from the Bavarian colonel, who was informing our General that the sortie was coming and that he was going, having received orders to retreat to Douzy. His information must have been of the worst description, as it afterwards appeared the Emperor had sur-

rendered himself and his army at 11 P.M. the night before. The colonel was resolved, perhaps, to leave us in an unsettled frame of mind, as he trotted away, leaving the village totally undefended; for he added the pleasant suggestion that probably on his leaving the peasantry would become excessively troublesome, and darkly hinted at robbery and murder. This combination of anticipated horrors induced us to get up and dress, whilst Mr. A—— saw to the harnessing of the horses to the waggons; but two or three hours passed away, and nothing happened.

Louise and myself sallied into the garden with a distant view to roast potatoes for breakfast from that especial plot we had seen. But as we got up to it, past some shrubs that hid it, we stared and rubbed our eyes. Were we dreaming still! Instead of the green plants was a tomb, a cross of iron placed on a square block of stone, a fresh wreath of flowers hanging upon it, and a lovely cross of chrysanthemums lying on

the newly-dug grave! We forgot all about our breakfast, and tried to find some clue to the mystery. We went into the street, and found one solitary Frenchman, who, seeing we were not 'Prussians,' told us he supposed it was done in the night. The Bavarian guard had drunk hard and slept soundly, and doubtless it was then that the body of some general officer had been interred there. That probably, also, the fact of seeing an Ambulance flag had been the inducement to bury it there, in the hope the grave would be undisturbed; that the iron cross had been taken from a stonemason's yard close by, as we might see for ourselves; and that perhaps after the war we should hear who it was. He did not know; how should he? These were no times for meddling in other people's business; but would we let the wreath and cross of flowers remain? It was nothing to him; why should it be? But, doubtless, it was some brave soldier, and the flowers did no harm. He

certainly knew more than he chose to tell us; but we assured him that whilst we remained no one should profane the last resting-place of the man, whoever he might be, on whose tomb might truly be engraven the grand old words that answered the challenge when the name of Latour d'Auvergne was called in the ranks of his grenadiers, 'Mort sur le champ d'honneur!'

As we were finishing our breakfast (so called by courtesy), we heard in the distance strains of martial music. The distant fields were half hidden by a golden mist, the Meuse was flashing in the sunlight, and the rain-drops of the night before were glistening on the leaves and hedges. If we could have avoided the sad foreground, and only looked across the green meadows to the hills beyond, we might have fancied it the gay music that preluded some great festival. The air was so like 'God save the Queen' that for a minute we listened, believing it to be so. At that

moment the late Emperor was passing as a prisoner through the ranks of the victorious army. It was evident that something important was going on. The General mounted his horse, and said he would ride into Sedan and go to the head-quarters to report our arrival, and ask for orders as to our destination. He begged us to remain in the house to await his return, as the village was so close to Sedan that it was in a disturbed state. He took a Red-Cross flag in his hand, and rode off.

He had hardly been gone before a trooper galloped furiously down the road towards Bazeilles; and some peasants going past, to try to re-enter their desolated homes and save what they could, told us that the French were about to break out of Sedan and force their way to the Belgian frontier. About half an hour afterwards we saw a vast mob of French soldiers coming up from the town. At that instant a regiment of Prussian cavalry

rode by and formed four deep, completely blocking the road, whilst picquets were sent into the gardens and lanes on either side to prevent the French getting past. It looked as if things were likely to get exciting, and we placed ourselves well behind our court-yard wall, where we could see all in comparative safety. The officer in command went forward alone and met two or three of the French. Apparently he convinced them of the hopelessness of the attempt, for after a short parley they retreated, and the cavalry withdrew into the park of the château we had inspected with a view to a possible Ambulance.

The roadway had been clear and all quiet about half an hour, when a small maid-servant came timidly stealing up to the front door, and asked leave to enter. We asked her her business, and she said she was the servant of the house. Her master and mistress were in Sedan. They had left several days before,

and had carried off the greater part of their furniture. She had remained in the house till the bombs were falling round it and the French were finally driven back, and a sergeant of the Marine Infantry had entered suddenly and begged her to retreat into Sedan, as the battle was lost and the enemy close behind. On this she fled, but in her haste she had left behind her the cat and two kittens, and she had come back to search for them, and to see who occupied the house or if it had been burned down, and to ask if she might take away a few vegetables and some salad, as there was very little to eat in Sedan. We graciously accorded her permission to take her master and mistress some of the contents of their own garden, and showed her that the house had not received serious damage. We took her upstairs, and she wept over the ruin of her crinoline, which was indeed but a shapeless mass, and the utter destruction of her best cap; but we consoled her by remembering we

had seen the kittens, indeed we had given them something of the little we had the night before. She grew quite cheerful, but the sight of the kitchen again overwhelmed her, and she sat down on the remains of a chair and lamented for all her pots and pans, which she assured us were once beautiful to behold; but just as she was growing hysterical with her grief a faint mew was heard. She started up, and the next instant the two kittens came racing in. They had heard her voice, and emerged from the hole where they were hidden to greet their mistress. She caught them up in her arms in a state of frantic delight. 'Oh, my little ones, my heroes! have you stayed here to guard your master's property? And the bomb shells have spared you. Ah! what courage you have! You ought to have the Cross of Honour! Oh, what happiness, my loves, to see you again!' The battle was lost, the house was wrecked, the Emperor a prisoner, and the Germans in their quiet homes;

but all faded into nothing before the joy of finding the kittens, though it was damped by sorrow for the still missing mother cat. The poor girl expressed her delight that we were in the house, and she knew we would not steal the things.

This we might safely have promised, under any temptation, for, as she said, everything had been carried off. She begged me to escort her back into Sedan, as the peasant who had brought her out was gone on to Bazeilles; so we started together. It was well to look straight forward at the green bastions of the town, for the sights by the way were not good to see, and, as we got close to the first gate, I met a burying party, and begged them to go to several places I pointed out to inter the dead. I saw the poor girl safe into the town, but it would have taken me too long to go to her master's house with her.

The streets were a mass of soldiery. The Germans had not entered, and guns, swords,

and belts were being flung about in every direction, and broken, to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands. Old officers stood about, some crying like children, and the frightened inhabitants were peeping out of their windows to watch the scene of confusion below. I returned, and found two or three of the Marine Infantry begging for five minutes' rest and a little soup. They had got past the guards, and were making their way over the wooded hills behind our house to the frontier, only about thirty miles off. It was no business of ours to detain them, so we gave them water to bathe their feet and a little soup, and they went out through the garden, to avoid the high road. Poor fellows, they gave us a sad account of the destruction of their battalion from the double fire of friend and foe, and we hoped that they might get safe away, and avoid that long captivity in Germany which we too truly apprehended would follow.

Then came a gentleman of the place, who begged us to go to a house two miles away, where many wounded were needing help. This we could not do, as we were ordered to remain till the General's return in the house, nor could we leave the stores. We, however, gave him various things for the wounded, and we proposed to him to send us all the wounded he met who could walk, and we would dress their wounds and give them some soup. This was accordingly done, and we were kept busy till the General came back. He had been to head-quarters, seen Prince Pless, and received orders to go on to the little village of Donchery, three miles beyond Sedan, and close by the chateau of Bellevue, where the Emperor passed his last night of freedom. He went to order the waggons to be ready at four o'clock, the streets of the town being still so crowded that it would be useless to attempt to drive through them; and as it would be too late that

night to commence any work at Donchery, it was as well to remain quietly, and get what dinner we could in Balan.

A carriage drove past. We caught sight of its inmate. It was Mr. Parker! We rushed out and 'hailed' him. Sundry dreadful ideas had been started that he had been burnt in Bazeilles. Why no one knew; but we were all delighted to see him. It seemed after leaving Grand Pré Mr. W—— and he had gone on to Beaumont, and finding the battle further ahead, had pushed on, missing the General and Mr. A——, who were quietly sleeping as Mr. W—— and Mr. Parker passed through. They had been on the battle-field close by Bazeilles, and narrowly escaped being shot by getting behind a wall. They had gone into Sedan that morning, and Mr. Parker was just setting out on an expedition to find us and bring us up. He was, of course, enchanted to find us so close to the scene of action. The General, finding he was with us, said he should like to

ride over the field, and he would meet us at Donchery, and off he went accordingly.

I proposed to Mr. Parker to show him the ruined château, and as there was also a very fine one opposite, he said he thought we had better look at that too, in case we wanted a good house for an Ambulance. It was an enormous place, but as rent was no consideration we agreed it would be wise to do so, and leaving Louise and the paid nurse in the house, we started off. Her statement is, that she immediately told the nurse to lock the doors, which was done; for the General having unfortunately said we were going, the Bavarian Guard began to take possession of the house. Louise then, being, as the old ballad says, 'of a frugal mind,' resolved to devote herself to the washing-tub, one of which had been discovered in the back premises. We had not had the chance of 'a wash' since we left Brussels. Water was very scarce, for here at Balan and round Sedan every stream was

choked with corpses, dead bodies of men and horses were floating in the Meuse, and very few wells and cisterns were uncontaminated by blood. But a pump had also been found in an outhouse, and these advantages, combined with the total impossibility of finding a washerwoman, induced her to tuck up her sleeves and go to work herself upon our mutual garments. The suds were flying about in all directions, as often happens with amateur efforts of this description, when the kitchen door opened suddenly, and she saw the captain of the Bavarian Guard. It flashed upon her directly that he had entered by the shutterless window and crept through the broken pannel of the drawing-room door, and that he meant mischief. He was very small, very ugly, and very sandy, something like an ill-bred Skye terrier, and Louise prepared to frown him down. What he said she did not comprehend, but she felt it was something very impertinent, and in a select mixture of

French and German she ordered his instant 'evacuation,' and showed him the door. It is to be presumed that she looked sufficiently ferocious to impress him with a sensation of fear, or the polyglot language in which he was addressed had a weird and awful sound, for he took to instant flight and retreated by the way he came.

It must be remarked he had watched all of us out before he tried this game; but then and ever afterwards we found that the Germans are easily subdued, if only anyone has the courage to turn upon them. We soon afterwards returned, and resolved not again to leave the house, for a party of officers were drinking and smoking in the court-yard, and our stores were not nailed down. One of them, a captain of Carabineers, had paid us three or four visits, and on each occasion had graciously accepted Liebig, melon, coffee, and potatoes, till we really thought we should have to nurse him in a horrible fit of indiges-

tion; and now they came to *borrow* the last half of our last melon and all the sugar, a loan still accumulating at compound interest. But what was worst of all, as showing the black ingratitude of human nature, when late that evening his comrades arrived with rations and wine and sundry good things, he never offered us any, and became loftily unconscious of our existence as we passed and repassed the table where he was sitting.

Mr. Parker was busy re-packing the boxes, which had been opened to give out stores in the village, and all being ready he and I sallied out to the stables to find our waggons and drivers, anticipating an early arrival at Donchery; but imagine our consternation when we found all were gone! We could hear nothing of them, except that they had been seen going back to Douzy an hour before, and had told some man who was lounging about his ruined cottage that they were afraid to go any further. What to do

was the question. Omnibuses and waggons were standing idle in every stable-yard of Balan, but horses there were none; and whilst Mr. Parker and I were arranging to try and send some Bavarian troopers after our runaways, I was summoned into the house to see a strange sight in those days—an English gentleman, and not of our party. I hastened back to see who it was, and if by chance he had brought any news from home.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MISERABLE VILLAGE.

I FOUND Louise talking with a very pleasant Englishman, who told us he had met with the General as he was riding out of Sedan, homeless and hungry, and who had suggested his coming on, where at all events he could get some soup and a rest. He was the correspondent of the 'Standard,' and no one could be more kind than he was. Forgetting his fatigue, he started off with me to seek for horses, and as we went down the road an officer galloped past us and, reining in his horse, claimed acquaintance with me. It was our Bavarian commandant of Grand Pré, but I did not recognise him in his shining helmet

and long white cloak. I explained our position, and begged him if he overtook our culprits on the road to arrest them and send them back, which he promised to do, and rode off at a rapid pace.

We prowled about the village street and into every stable and yard; no horses were there. The dead bodies were yet unburied, and the place was deserted. My friend offered to take on three of the ladies in his waggon, with only their hand-bags, as he was going to Donchery, and so it was arranged; Miss McLaughlin and myself remaining behind with Mr. Parker, to see what the morrow would bring forth. Their journey, we heard later, had been tedious and difficult, owing to the crowded state of the streets of Sedan. They arrived very late at Donchery, and could only find miserable accommodation.

The unfortunate French army, 80,000 strong, had not yet been consigned to that miserable island on the Meuse where so

many perished of cold and hunger. They were throwing their arms and accoutrements into the ditches which surrounded the town, and into the river itself, and were still lingering about the streets. Hundreds escaped, though the Prussian lines had closed all round the town, and hundreds more might have done so, the frontier was so near. But many still believed that had not MacMahon been lying desperately wounded, unable to move, and almost unconscious of what was going on, that he, at the head of 80,000 well-armed and unwounded veteran troops, would and could have cut a passage through the lines, even if half had perished in the attempt. But the Emperor had signed the capitulation, he was a prisoner on his way to Germany, and the army of his conquerors were preparing for their march on Paris. Sad tales are told of the ball given at Sedan, which delayed the advance of MacMahon's army by twenty-four hours, when, had the troops been pushed

forward, it is said Metz might been relieved; and legends are still current of the more than Sardinapalian luxury of the Emperor's travelling suite; of his thirty carriages, which, whilst crossing the bridge over the Meuse on the afternoon of that fatal 1st of September, prevented the French batteries from playing on the Prussian troops beyond; of generals declining to leave their breakfasts that they might hurry on their men to check the enemy; and never will the French think otherwise than that utter incapacity and, worse still, treason of the blackest description consigned their best army to death and imprisonment.

But the full extent of the defeat and misfortune was unknown to us, when, after seeing our companions off, in charge of their kind escort, Louise and myself returned into the house to see what dinner we could prepare, and whilst she endeavoured to find some of the cooking utensils I went off into

the garden to look for vegetables. I saw in the distance a piece of very young-looking carrots, and remembering how very hard those I had brought on the preceding evening had been, I went to it to try for some better ones. But lying amongst them, crushing down the pale green leaves, was a dead Prussian, shot through the head. Poor fellow, he was a young man, with fair hair, and except for the wound and the blood stain on one side of his face, he might have been sleeping. I covered up his face with a handkerchief I found in the breast of his coat, and left him lying there, in the quiet garden.

Mr. Parker had made another excursion to see if our absconding drivers had been found, but of course they had made the best of their way in a homeward direction. The Bavarians had taken possession of all the bed-rooms, so we resolved to make up a bed in the dining-room, on the heavy bedstead, and Mr. Parker, with his usual good-nature and cheerfulness,

declared he preferred a mattress and blanket in a corner of the kitchen to any other more luxurious arrangement. We were very cheerful over Liebig and coffee, and whilst sitting round the kitchen stove we heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs and the firm step and clear voice of the General. He had been benighted on the field of battle, and, instead of going on to Donchery, had ridden into Balan, knowing he should find a stable for his horse and a shelter for himself, for it was now raining heavily. We welcomed him as best we could on our scanty means, but some boiled haricots, which had been too hard for our dinner, were by this time arrived at a softer stage, and he made a supper off them. He arranged with Mr. Parker that both would like an early ride round by Floing, where the cavalry had perished *en masse*, and return to us about eight or nine o'clock, and the General would then go into Sedan, and request from the Prussian Commandant the

use of some train-waggons and horses, as so many, captured from the French, were standing idle. He was very indignant at the impertinence of the Bavarian captain, and the continued annoyance they had been to us by trying to come into the kitchen to cook their rations, when they had a large fire and every convenience in a sort of wash and bakehouse at the back—a system carried to such an extent that, when a good-natured soldier was chopping some wood for Louise to cook by, an officer forbade him to do so, and ordered him only to chop the wood for their cooking.

However, being indignant was utterly useless, and we all went to bed, or rather mattress. The first part of the night passed off in profound tranquillity; but at early dawn, or rather before it, Louise, hearing the gentlemen moving about, was seized with an idea how comfortless it would be for them to have no breakfast, and that she would get up and make

it. I remonstrated, first on the ground that the male sex always looked after themselves, and secondly, that there was no breakfast to make. To which she rejoined she had found some cold bacon she could fry, and had a little chocolate she could warm, that the male sex were *not* capable of taking care of themselves, and that, as they were going over the battle-fields, they must have food first. This difference of opinion resulted in my staying in bed and her getting up, but, truth to tell, I had had no solid food for three days, not a drop of wine, hardly any bread, and I could not eat the so-called bacon, which was nothing but a piece of some horrible fat. I was weak and tired from actual want of nourishment. It was two hours before our friends got off and Louise came back. We resolved to sleep till eight o'clock, when we expected them again. But we had hardly tried to close our eyes before we heard the lock of the door being tried. We thought it was fancy,

but presently the other door was attempted. Louise called out to know who was there, and the answer was a burst of insulting laughter. Fortunately, we had barricaded one door the night before, and the window shutters fastened inside. We dragged a heavy box against the remaining door, and felt pretty sure that the Bavarian officers, whom we knew were prowling in the hall, could not enter; but there we lay. Bright daylight came on, and we could not open the shutters, for the windows were broken, and we felt utterly helpless, alone in the house with this set of ruffians round us.

The annoyance of attempting to get in continued, as it seemed, for hours. At last we heard the bugles for parade and a clatter out of the house. We got up and dressed, and ventured to peep out. Our persecutors were gone, for the time at least, but they had carried off all that was left of our bread, though that very little and very old, the small remains of

the bacon, and most of the cooking utensils. We had no water to wash with, for they had thrown all kinds of dirt into the open cistern, the pump would hardly work, and we felt very dirty and dispirited. We began a search, and found a little flour in a jar in an out-of-the-way corner, and Louise made a few flour cakes. How we longed for the return of the gentlemen! and to get away from this detestable neighbourhood.

Presently the small maid-servant arrived from Sedan. She feared we were gone, and had come to see what was the fate of the house. She, on being closely questioned, said she knew a neighbour who had returned, bringing out of the town some mutton, and she thought, if she was entrusted with a five franc piece, she could get us some mutton cutlets. The very idea was encouraging, and we sent her on the errand. She actually found the neighbour who had the mutton, and for three francs and a half brought us what we

should call in England the worst half of a neck of mutton. To cook our chops was a great struggle, but we succeeded; we had still some coffee, though no milk, and with the flour cakes began what we considered a delicious breakfast, when horses' hoofs rang on the pavement of the yard, and we ran out to welcome the General and Mr. Parker. How hungry they were, how astonished they were to see hot mutton, and how they enjoyed it. They had ridden far and wide over the battle-fields and been to Floing. We had no curiosity to walk over the hill behind the house to see the other parts of the field. The battle had been all around us, even in our own garden, where forty-five dead bodies were found, hidden amongst the shrubs, and in the private lane leading to the coach-house. We had no desire to see more horrors than fell to our share in the way of duty, and we gladly began to prepare for our departure.

The General rode into Sedan, and in about an hour returned with a train of waggons, horses, and soldiers, sufficient to convey the baggage of a regiment. They were French artillery, prisoners of course, and the Prussian commander had ordered out some vague number to assist us. Our chests, much reduced in number and weight, were distributed at the rate of what Louise declared was one a-piece in the great ammunition waggons, and the soldiers formed an imposing array in the road. Poor fellows, how sad they looked! unarmed, and servants to any one who claimed them from their masters the Prussians. They brightened up under the influence of kindly words and real sympathy—who could help feeling it?—and they said that, after all, serving English ladies was very different from being at the beck and call of German officers. The *sous-officier* in command was a most intelligent, bright, well-educated young man named Louis Bobard.

His sister was a governess in an English family in London, and before we had made acquaintance ten minutes he had given us his name and a short greeting written to her on a piece of paper, which he had found an opportunity of slipping into our hands, to be delivered as soon as we could. What amused us most of all was the spare horses led behind the waggons, it looked so excessively formidable and was so truly ludicrous, considering the feather weight in each waggon and the three miles we had to go.

Finally, the horses were ordered to be harnessed to the carriage which had brought Mr. Parker. Louis, and Hippolyte, his second in command, being detailed to ride by our side, we expected to start directly, when a hue and cry commenced. The pole of the carriage was gone, nowhere could it be found; and that was not surprising, for we ascertained that the Bavarians had burnt it for

their bivouac fire. Now, as there were trees all round, to say nothing of firewood ready chopped in the yard, it was a wasteful proceeding. An appeal was made to the Prussian officer in command, for by this time the new guard which had replaced our tormentors had arrived, and he remembered he had seen a carriage with a pole in a neighbouring coach-house, and ordered one of his men to fetch the pole. This was done, and at last we started, thankful to be out of that miserable village; but one thing upset all our gravity just as we were going off.

The little maid-servant had prowled about, jealously watching lest we should carry off any of the shreds of property remaining, and finally she discovered being hoisted into a waggon a small rough deal box, value in material about sixpence. It had been lying about, and taking it for one of ours, some lint and other parcels which had been turned out of a nearly empty large chest, which was left

behind, had been packed into it. She began a series of lamentations over our thievish propensities and the loss of the box. It was the dog's box, her master had made it himself, and did we intend to be so wicked as to carry it off? Considering the state of things, it was too ludicrous. We declined to unpack the box, and shewed her the much better one we had left. All in vain; she refused to be consoled, and we left her locking up what was left of the doors, in spite of all assurances that the next body of troops who passed would insist on finding quarters there.

We drove at a rapid pace into Sedan. The streets were pretty clear now, the prisoners all on the island of the Meuse, but the usual train of military waggons blocked the gate on the other side of the town. At last we got through, and on to the road leading past the Château Bellevue, where the Emperor had slept the night after the battle, and past the little cottage in front of which, as legends

say, he and Bismarck sat and settled the fate of an empire. As we were driving along with our imposing cortege we overtook a pedestrian so evidently English that we stared and he bowed, and, coming up, told us he had seen our friends in Donchery, that morning. It was Mr. Landle, of the 'Illustrated London News.' He got on the box and drove with us to Donchery.

Sedan is a very small town, built in a valley through which runs the Meuse, and surrounded on all sides by hills. It is walled around with deep ditches and drawbridges, so that the gates once shut, getting out was impossible. It is as pretty a specimen of a trap as could well be imagined, and I was assured afterwards that, had the gates been shut when the French army were retreating, the battle would not have been lost. They could not have got in, and must have fought it out. That is the opinion of the townspeople; but it could not alter the fact of the German bat-

teries, being allowed to be planted on those hills, firing shot and shell at leisure into the crowded town below.

It was just six o'clock as we passed over a wooden bridge and up the narrow street of Donchery, deep in mud, wondering where our friends might be, when we caught sight of them looking out of the window of a small cottage. They greeted us with delight. The General, who was riding by our side, proposed that Louise and myself in the carriage should go with him to report our arrival to the head physician. We enquired for the residence of the General in command, and drove on to the little central Place. Here a lovely band was playing gay waltzes—what a mockery it seemed of the wretchedness around—and the Prussian General and a group of officers were standing listening to it. Our General introduced himself and us, and the head physician, who was there, gave us a hearty welcome. He took us off directly to see a house that was

being fitted up as a Hospital, showed us where the stores would be placed, and suggested our sleeping in some rooms there; but the Prussian general opposed this. He thought it would be far pleasanter for us to have quarters elsewhere, and sent an orderly down a side street to a house vacated that morning by some staff officers to find us quarters. We followed, and found ourselves in a charming little house, with most respectable people, who, though we were unpaid lodgers, were only too glad to escape quarters of soldiers, and begged us piteously to pitch our tent there. This we did by leaving our baggage. A stable next door was found for the horses, and the little army soon deposited the store-chests in the new Hospital. Before dark we were safely housed, and the poor people, finding we were too late to get our rations, kindly cooked for us what they had.

We held a long consultation that night. The little money we had was all but exhausted

and the stores nearly used up. We had tried to communicate with England and failed, and Mr. Parker and the General strongly urged my going home for a few days to report our progress and bring out stores. The General was going on with the head-quarters, and Mr. Parker would not leave the ladies again; so I consented to go, if I found I was not actually wanted. The next morning we went to the Hospital. We were most graciously received, and entered the wards. There were no wounded, only fever cases, and plenty of German orderlies. So little was there to do that I was glad to see some of us employed in sewing up sheets in a peculiar German fashion. At early dinner Mr. Parker and all of us decided that this state of things would never do.

In the afternoon the correspondent of the 'Illustrated London News' came in and quite agreed that we were wasted there. He mentioned the Anglo-American Ambulance

in the great Caserne Asfeld, Sedan, how they were crowded with wounded, and no help, and begged us to go to them. We resolved to wait a day and see before we decidedly left the service we had been attached to. We wanted orders, and to get them seemed more imperative than ever; and it was settled I should start the next day and return as soon as possible. That evening, too, my knee, which I had hurt falling on a stone at Grand Pré during the struggle to change the baggage to our own waggons, became very swelled and stiff, and kneeling beside the low beds—only mattresses laid on the floor—was impossible. Thus I was temporarily useless and so my departure was finally arranged.

The next day no further work offered. We looked round the Hospital. The German orderlies did not care about our assisting them, and it was too evident our stores, not ourselves, were the attraction. But I deferred my start, hoping to the last we might have orders.

That afternoon Mr. Landle, of the 'Illustrated London News,' and "Dr. B——, an Englishman in her Majesty's service, but of German extraction, tempted Louise and myself to go on an expedition to the railway station to see if any fast trains were available. It poured with rain. But we persevered; we found a train starting with French wounded, who were allowed to go to Mézières, about ten miles further on in the French lines. At Mézières they would find trains for Lille and the north-west of France. There were so many prisoners in health and strength that the Prussians did not then care to take to the rear a number of helpless men. We found that it was very uncertain when the next would go, if at all, and the only way was to drive to Pois St.-Hubert, the nearest station on the Luxemburg line, and thence take train to Brussels. We returned wet and miserable. But what must have been the

fearful sufferings of the poor prisoners on the marshy island of the Meuse?

The sad tale has been already told most truthfully and graphically by Mr. Seymour, M.P., in a letter to the 'Daily Telegraph,' published about the second week of September. He visited the island on the day following this miserable afternoon of rain, September 6, and his account has been fully confirmed by the statements of various soldiers whom we afterwards met—how they had no bread, and no possibility of buying any, no shelter, no great coats or cloaks; they had been taken from them or lost on the battle-field. A soldier, afterwards an Infirmier in our Ambulance at Orleans, told us that he himself was one of those who saw starving soldiers eating the entrails of dead horses. Louis Brancard escaped with some 1,400 others, and rejoined his battalion of the Marine Infantry, to be again wounded and a prisoner on December 4;

but fortunately we obtained for him from the Prussians a commission as Infirmier, and he remained with us till the peace left him once more free.

No provisions had been sent out with us, such as casks of biscuits, Liebig, or preserved milk, and even had we gone to the island we had no means of affording any relief. Our own rations allowed by the Prussians, and which we accepted because we could buy nothing, were very scanty. I do not think the meat given for six persons was more than we often saw one German soldier carrying home for himself. The prisoners were evacuated at the rate of some thousands a day, but the number that perished by famine on that sad island will never be known. Herded together like sheep, strictly guarded, but no common precaution of humanity taken to feed them, what else could be expected. Their blood is on the head of whoever had the command at Sedan, and who let helpless men die for the

want of the bread his soldiers flung away as hard and dry unless fresh from the bakehouse, and sent rations to the guards, who ate the soup and meat and bread and drank their wine in stolid indifference to the starving crowd around them.

We were glad to find shelter in our quarters, and Mr. Parker coming in with a gentleman, a German physician, who would be glad of a 'lift' in the carriage to Pois St.-Hubert, and it was therefore settled that he should come in the evening to make final arrangements. Mr. Landle was to come also with letters and sketches for his office in London, which I had promised to convey, and it was suggested that we might as well give them a cup of coffee. So after dinner we prepared for our evening reception by lighting two more of the Balan candles, and to add to the festive appearance of the scene we placed a black bottle of sherry, which Mr. Parker had bought in Sedan, in the centre of a round

table, with a ring of glasses encircling it, and so received our guests, who brought their own cigars. Dr. B—— came in also, and it is to be hoped that the pleasure of our society compensated for the muddy walk they had to take to come to the house, for except coffee and dry bread they had nothing else. We waited for Mr. Parker to propose a glass of sherry round, but he, always thoughtful for our comforts, just as he was meditating where the corkscrew was, was seized with the idea that, perhaps, some of us might be ill where nothing was to be had, and it would be wise to keep it for such an emergency; so he said nothing, and the bottle remained unopened. We were all very cheerful, however; and if it ever was a matter of surprise to any of our guests why *that* bottle was simply used as an ornament, we hereby beg to explain, and should this narrative of our doings come under their eyes, we also beg to apologise for the inhospitality, and to assure them that, in

spite of Mr. Parker's real kindness in thus guarding against future want for us, we should have been happy to have shared the contents of our cellar (one bottle) with them, for, generally and individually, we always received from Mr. Landle, Mr. Austin of the 'Standard,' and all of their fraternity, the greatest kindness and attention, and found them very pleasant, highly educated, and gentlemanly companions.

CHAPTER XIV.

TO ENGLAND AND BACK.

THE morning of the 7th of September was bright and fine when, at the appointed hour, 5 A.M., I made my appearance, ready for the journey; but with the well-known unpunctuality of the male sex in general, neither my two escorts, Mr. Parker and Dr. M——, were there, nor were the despatches of the General finished. It was past seven before we left, and drove at a rapid pace through Sedan. It was far more empty and quiet now. The French were on their island, and the Germans were at breakfast. We passed through Balan, and, though still ruined and desolate, the dead bodies of men and horses had been

buried; but the road beyond was even now strewed with knapsacks, helmets, rifles, and all the litter of a battle-field.

As we neared Bazeilles, we saw a little thin blue smoke slowly curling up into the morning air from the still smouldering ruins. A few peasants were digging in the ground floors of the roofless, windowless, smoke-blackened houses, we thought to search for anything that might have escaped the general ruin. We heard later it was for a far sadder object. Many women and children had hidden in the cellars during the fight, and then when the town was fired by hand, and the Bavarians were rushing from house to house with lighted torches, had not dared to escape, and so perished in the burning ruins. One man was found, strange to say, with an iron chain, still attached by a belt, also of iron, round his charred form. So local legends say, but I never heard any explanation, probable or improbable, of this wild story. Many walls

had fallen and cumbered the street with heaps of brick and stone, but all traces of war had vanished, and the destruction of the pretty town might have been caused by some every-day event.

We drove steadily on till at last, on a very very long road, we became aware that our axletrees were red-hot, and we made all haste to a little house we saw which professed to give, according to English parlance, 'Good accommodation for man and beast,' and there we got down, while water was thrown on the wheels, and they were put into safe order. We were over the Belgian frontier, it seems, but where it began or ended I know not. I think we passed a couple of Belgian hussars a few miles farther back; but as neither hussars nor travellers seemed to take the slightest interest in each other's proceedings, I cannot really say if they were the frontier guards or not. As we were waiting in the little sanded parlour of the auberge, I sud-

denly spied a French paper—the only news we had seen since we left Luxemburg. The three of us read it together, and saw that France was once more a republic. It was such a delight to feel restored to a knowledge of the events passing around us. In the midst of conflicts that changed the destiny of a great nation we had been ignorant of the result of them, except that the Emperor was a prisoner, which fact had been announced to us by the triumphal music of the Prussian bands.

After a breakfast of eggs and bacon we went on and on over those interminable swells of down land, up and up, till we suddenly began to descend, and there before us, in a picturesque gorge with a stream rushing through it, was the romantic town of Bouillon, with the grand old castle of the great Crusader frowning down from its rocky platform on the houses nestled below. The town was very crowded with refugees from Bazeilles

and Balan, and having already rested and refreshed we pushed on to Pois St.-Hubert, over more heights, through a long forest of low trees, till we came down a rapid slope to Pois St.-Hubert, the station, with a few miserable houses, being distant a couple of miles from the town of the same name. We expected just to catch a train; in fact, Mr. Parker did catch one to Arlon, where he was going to try for stores, but this was quite unexpected.

We thought the Brussels train would have gone first, but we had to wait a couple of hours, and when it did come it was on the other side, where there was no platform. My escort and several gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who hearing our business took a great interest in it and most kindly remained to help us, got me safely into a carriage, and we were off for Brussels. We reached it very late at night, and Dr. M—— took me to the Hôtel de Suède, where, though there was not a spare bed-room, they took me in and gave

me a room somewhere up in the sky, with three or four beds in it, I suppose a servants' room, but very clean and comfortable. The directress, if such she was, who spoke perfect English, asked me if I would not take something after my long journey. Now, as I had breakfasted at 11 A.M. and it was midnight, the proposal was most acceptable; but it was now so many days since even money could have procured food and wine, that I humbly said, forgetting I was in one of the best hotels of Brussels, 'If I could have a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine I would gladly pay anything for it.' The kind directress stared and smiled, and as it flashed suddenly upon me that I was where I only had to ask and have if I would pay, I burst out laughing and explained. Bread and wine and something of cold meat were directly brought. Indeed nothing could exceed the kindness and sympathy of all in that hotel with the tired and dirty Red-Cross stranger.

My escort was accommodated with a mattress in the dining-room, and I only hope he slept as soundly as I did, for it was broad daylight before I woke up, dressed, and went downstairs, and found Dr. M—— just preparing to go by an early train to Ostend. Now, my experiences of that passsge were enough, and finding I could get to London as quickly by Calais *viâ* Lille, we parted with an agreement to meet at Dover, where both boats were to arrive simultaneously; but I had three or four hours more on land. I was going for a little walk, when I was requested to speak to some ladies who much wished to see me. They had relations with the French army at Sedan, and naturally hoped to gain a chance scrap of news of some brigade or regiment in that doomed army; and all the morning the long, sad procession filed into the little public room where I was sitting, with the same anxious question from all, 'What news of such and such a regiment?' and the same

prayer to take back to Sedan the few lines of love or sorrow that, if the dear one were in some crowded Hospital or Ambulance, might come like a voice from home, or the slip of paper with simply the name, to search for it, if possible, in the list (if such existed) of the dead or the wounded and the prisoners at Sedan. Poor breaking hearts, they had come as near to the frontier as possible, where the earliest news might be had, and all was silence. It was one of the most painful features of the war that fearful suspense as to the fate of the absent, one that neutrals alone could relieve. But surely common humanity might have suggested some relaxation of the strict rule of no communication between the occupied and unoccupied departments, if only it had been permitted for the prisoners to send one open letter to say if they were wounded or only prisoners. Cannot the Geneva Convention take this into consideration, and so heal many a deep wound no surgeon could cure?

I left Brussels in the forenoon, but at Lille I was astonished, when I presented myself at the passport office, where the passports were examined, it being the French frontier, to be told indignantly, as I thought, to go back to my carriage. Seeing my surprise, the official added, pointing to my brassard, 'That is enough, and they say you come from Sedan.' I pleaded guilty, and was surrounded by a crowd, all burning with desire to hear something of the great battle from an actual eye-witness. Apparently I was the first waif and stray that had surged up from the wreck of war, and I was accordingly a great personage for the next half-hour. At the next station where we stopped there was no buffet, and I was astonished to see the station-master coming up the line, with a tray upon which were wine, fruit, and delicate biscuits. He mounted the step of my carriage, and begged me to take some refreshment, and so kind and graceful was the act, that I accepted it, not as done to myself, but to the badge I

wore. Calais was reached at last, I found my expected arrival had been telegraphed, and here a very good dinner was ready, and as I was told that the Paris train was very late, I did not hurry on board.

At last, weary of the station, I took up all my baggage (a hand-bag) and went down to the port. The sun was shining with a blinding glare, but a brisk wind was blowing, and the purple sea was breaking here and there into ridges of foam, 'the wild white horses,' as Arnold calls them, very beautiful to see, but very unpleasant to ride. I went down and took up my place by the companion ladder. We waited, and waited, but no signs of weighing anchor or loosing cables appeared. The captain said he must wait for the mail-bags from Paris. The tide got lower and lower, the ladder communicating with the shore was a steep descent, when suddenly there came rushing along the pier a wild crowd of men, women, and children, en-

cumbered with more parcels than can be well conceived, and, stranger still, dogs, cats, birds in cages, tied up in pocket-handkerchiefs, and all sorts of odds and ends. They commenced tumbling down the ladder, arrested by the sailors, who kept them from tumbling into the water, and shrieking to friends and relatives on the pier behind to hasten for their lives, or all was lost. The boat would be gone, and no hope would be left. For one moment, I had a wild notion that the Prussians had taken Calais at bayonet's point, but I discovered directly afterwards they were refugees from Paris. What a motley throng they were!—women and children, and strong men too, who should have stayed behind with the brave hearts fighting for France.

But the cables were loosed, the steam was up, and soon a mile or two of troubled water separated us from that unhappy land. I went down to the cabin, and slept soundly, though

my travelling companions did not fare so well, and very wretched they looked when we landed at Dover. It was past 8 P.M. before I reached my home. I had sent a telegram from Brussels to the Secretary of the National Society, and next morning went down there to meet the committee. Captain Burgess gave me a warm welcome, and after waiting some time, Colonel Loyd-Lindsay and Sir Harry Verney came in. I had been told before I left Donchery to be sure three members of the Executive Committee were there, as not less than a quorum (three) would be likely to make an act legal. Perhaps it might be so; but at that time they were not disinclined to trust me, nor I them. I presented the despatches; but before they were looked at Colonel Lindsay said, 'First of all, where is Mr. A——'s (the Secretary's) Ambulance?' Now this was puzzling. We had never seen him since we left Pont-à-Mousson. Yet he had brought us out from England, so in a

state of indecision as to whether we were his Ambulance or not, I answered, 'At Donchery, I suppose, if we are his Ambulance.' But here I was peremptorily cut short; we were *not* his Ambulance. Had I seen his Ambulance? Like all women, I felt inclined to be excessively sulky at the dictatorial tone; however, I kept it down, and simply said, in an injured manner, 'I know nothing about it, then.'

The Colonel then soothed down, as it seemed to me, and explained that they had 'sent the fellow out' with 800*l.*, and had never heard a word of him or his Ambulance, which was quite distinct from ours. I said, 'Evidently so, as I have come home with the last money mustered amongst us, and paid my own passage.' A map was then produced, and I was put through my geographical facings as regarded the neighbourhood of Sedan. I believe I must have answered to their perfect satisfaction, as we all became

great friends, and they acted, I must say, most kindly and handsomely. They gave me everything I asked for, as I tried to explain why such and such things were necessary, especially ready money, to buy on the spot what could not be sent from England, such as fresh bread, butter, eggs, and vegetables, for the sick, and things that did not answer carriage; and I was confided to the care of one of the kindest and most cordial of their officials, with whom I went to buy ready articles not in stock. Those were our palmy days.. (I belonged to that great Society then.) We had a regiment of clerks, and another of commissionaires, properly bearded and medalled (three clasps apiece), and hosts of young gentlemen thirsting to assist the good cause at the rate of a pound a day. We went about in cabs, and sent foreign telegrams, two sheets a-piece. I wonder what they cost. I know one I saw contained nothing that could not have been sent by post; but we had a princely fortune,

and what was expense to us? I felt as if I had suddenly become an heiress. I was taken into shops, and chose what I liked, and the bill was to be sent in. It was a trial of virtue. I had a maniac notion of suggesting velvet dressing-gowns and cambric handkerchiefs for the wounded, and astounding Howell and James (close by, too) with a gigantic order, bill, as usual, to be sent in to the Committee. Honesty, however, prevailed. I chose only what I had been requested to get, and took a box of stores of my own (merely actual preventives of the famine we had undergone), mostly presents from private friends, and was told I was a noodle for my pains. Two days of hard work ensued. We had fairly worn out, even in that short time, our only dresses as ordered by the Committee, and I ventured to have four made to replace them.

I paid a very flying visit to my sister, Mrs. Walford Gosnal, at Ipswich, during the hours I was not required by the Com-

mittee, and found that I could adhere strictly to the programme laid out for me, that on a certain day and hour I was to be again at Pois St.-Hubert with the stores. I had a most friendly reception at the Prussian Embassy, and it is to the kindness of Count and Countess Bernstoff, and the safe-conduct they sent me, that we owe much of the good we were afterwards enabled to do, and the comfort and safety we enjoyed when all around was troubled; and this was given, to their honour be it spoken, to help us to enter Paris, and later to go into Orleans to help the Bishop, himself a Frenchman, with French wounded under his own roof. Mr. Adams, of Putney, called upon me and offered his escort. He was taking out stores, and our waggons could take them on with his. It was a most acceptable idea, and all arrangements being made, we left Charing Cross on the night of the 13th, for Ostend, *viâ* Dover. It was a lovely evening, the sea as calm as a lake, and we made a very short passage to Ostend. From thence,

viâ Brussels, to Pois St.-Hubert, where I caught sight of our French *maréchal des logis*, waiting with a letter from Louise. Mr. Parker arrived just afterwards at the little wayside hotel where we were to put up for the night. It was too late, he said, to push on to Sedan, where I found our party had gone to aid the Anglo-American Ambulance. I had arrived over land and sea with all the baggage, and 300*l.* in gold in my little courier bag, to the very day and hour appointed; but the effort was too much. Exertion, anxiety, and the privations of the previous weeks, had done their work, and I was obliged to leave my friends and go to my own room, where, miserable as it was, I could at least lie down and try to rest. That day was the beginning of a severe illness. I was wholly unfit to travel farther; but I was resolved to get on to Sedan, and next morning I got into the Ambulance omnibus which was awaiting us, and as we went on our way I read Louise's letter.

CHAPTER XV.

LOUISE'S LETTER.

Caserne Asfelde, Sedan, September 11, 1870.

'My dearest Emma,—I know you will be anxious to hear how we have fared since you left. You shall be *au fait* of all that has happened before you join us again. I send this by Hippolyte, who comes with Mr. Parker to meet you, and it may serve to amuse you on the dull road from St.-Hubert to Sedan. You have doubtless heard we were here, and you will be very glad, as you thought we were very useless at Donchery. How I wonder if you have brought out the stores? Perhaps not, as Captain Brackenbury has sent over several waggon-loads from

Arlon, and young Sims has also arrived with a splendid supply. We have plenty of everything now, and as, doubtless, this is known in England, it will have saved you much trouble and responsibility.

'Who is young Sims? you will ask. Well, my story will explain that. After you left we went down to the Hospital. There was literally nothing they would give us to do, so we took a walk on to the bridge, and there we met Dr. B——. I explained how grieved we were to find ourselves so useless, with such numbers of wounded in the villages all around. He said he had a few men in a Convent, if we liked to go and nurse them for him. There was nothing better to be done, so we went. There were sixteen men in all, four wounded, the rest fever and dysentery. We divided this amongst us.

'During the afternoon the Secretary turned up. He called at our quarters. I was in Hospital, and did not see him. He had got

an Ambulance, as he calls it, here, consisting of a train of empty waggons, for conveying the German wounded to the nearest railroad station. Some say he had blankets, but we have not seen them. I wish he would give us some; they would be useful in Sedan. He was as mysterious as usual, and we saw nothing of him. He had a very nice omnibus, which the General required for us, and you will travel in it to-day. I believe there was some little difficulty about the arrangement, but the Secretary had to give in. The Admiral, as you call him, came back in the evening, as jolly as ever, and brought all the London newspapers with him; that is, all the correspondents. I wish you had been there; they were all so pleasant, I have not had such a merry evening since we left England. We received them at supper! Don't be astonished, when you remember the small rations of tough beef, and the very sour wine, and the soup, that was really only hot water. We

found the room, and they brought their own provisions—pâté de foie gras and champagne! Think of that. And they made us welcome to it all, and we did enjoy ourselves; but the society was the best part of it all.

'Everyone had his own special tale of adventure to tell us, and we could compare accounts of what we had seen with their experiences. Educated English gentlemen never appeared to better advantage than in contrast with those selfish Knights of St. John, with their long pedigrees and empty heads! They came again next evening. Mr. Parker had returned from escorting you to St.-Hubert, and had met Captain Brackenbury, the English Societies' Agent, at Arlon. The day after that was the 9th. The General left with the French troop. I don't know where they are gone; I believe to pursue the chase of the King. We walked to see the little cottage, just out of the town, where the Emperor and Bismarck met. Such a little one, so small

and dirty, that they sat outside and transacted their business. I suppose the war will end now. The Germans have no reason for going on with it. The King of Prussia said it was the Emperor he was fighting against, not the people. Well, the Emperor is a prisoner, with all that splendid army. What more can Bismarck and the King want?

'Yesterday Mr. Parker came in and told us he had got work for us at Balan, under Dr. Frank, who had a château ready for us, and was anxious we should go. Mr. Parker had arranged that two should go, and two remain to superintend the Infirmiers here. Of course there were difficulties as to who should go. You can easily guess them, and I will tell you more when you come back; but it was finally settled I and nurse should go. Fancy our disappointment, after we had packed up and all, to find the head German doctor had put his veto on it. We were not to go, and yet

he gave us no work at Donchery! Captain Furley called in the evening; he was most kind. A week ago he suggested our going over to aid the Anglo-American Ambulance at Sedan; perhaps it is through him we are here now. However that may be, this morning Mr. Parker told us that nurse and myself were to go to Sedan. Dr. Marion Sims had made a most pressing demand for our services. He has 600 badly wounded here, and sadly needed help.

'We got here at seven o'clock. The place is miserably uncomfortable, and nothing prepared for us. Dr. Marion Sims says he must have all the rest of us, so the other ladies will come over to-morrow. I do hope to get things a little better before you arrive. We have no sheets, and only one room for the five of us. The whole thing wants setting to rights. I have not been into the wards yet, it is too late to-night, but they seem crowded with sufferers. You remember how anxious

Mr. Landle of the "Illustrated London News" was we should come here. It was he told Dr. Sims we were at Donchery. He was quite right; we never could be more wanted than we are here. How glad I shall be to have you back again, dear; the week has been an age since you left.

'Ever yours lovingly,

'LOUISE.'

There was certainly food for reflection in Louise's letter, reflection sadly interrupted by the erratic proceedings of one of our horses, who would persist in turning round to look in at the omnibus windows and declining to go on, except under severe punishment. I was beginning, too, to feel very ill, hardly able to bear the drive, and when we arrived at Bouillon I was only thankful to crawl upstairs in a dirty cabaret and lie down on a filthy bed. Yet thought will not be banished, and I thought on. I was very glad that our

party had moved to Sedan, it was so evident the Germans only valued our stores, not our personal assistance. The poor defeated French might be more grateful. Then I was rejoiced that Captain Brackenbury had taken the command, though how far his power superseded that of the Committee I did not know. In London they had never named him to me, except that they had heard from him that some of us were at Sedan. Then about the stores. Young Sims had brought out a great many, and Captain Brackenbury had sent in more; those coming out with me, to follow with the heavy waggon next day, were plainly therefore very superfluous. Harry Sims had started from London, Captain Brackenbury had telegraphed his proceedings there; why had they sent out such a number of valuable bales by me? However, I was too ill to speculate on the subject, and settled it in my own mind by deciding they had so much money they did not know what to do

with it; but my general impression was of a hopeless confusion at head-quarters.

Sedan was reached at last, and we crossed the drawbridge and passed into the town. We traversed the narrow streets, crossed the Place Turenne, and stopped short just beyond it, where a steep road turned off to the right, up a hill, crowned by an old keep and a long range of buildings, the Caserne Asfelde, now occupied by the Anglo-American Ambulance, under the charge of Dr. Marion Sims. Here, as our horse positively refused to advance a step further, and seemed hardly able to hold up, I thought it better to walk up the hill and find shelter in our quarters. The road crossed another drawbridge and led on to a green plateau, on which many tents were pitched. The dirt was something frightful; every dressing that had been taken off had been thrown out of the windows, and strewed the ground below. We entered the entrance door at the end of the building; boxes and

bales were heaped around it and about the stone staircase. The smell was terrible, and the whole thing seemed to want organising from beginning to end.

I found my way into a barrack-room at the head of the staircase, just outside the swing door leading into the wards, and, unable even to stand, flung myself on the first bed I found there, and asked for Louise. She was attending the operations, I heard; and I had only to lie quiet, half-insensible, till the nurse came in, and, frightened to see the state I was in, ran off to find my friend and beg her to come quickly. When she did arrive, I was undressed and put into her bed, and Dr. Sims was sent for. He ordered me not to stir, and he would see in the morning what could be done. I tried to give our friends all the information I could, but I deferred asking any questions as to our present position till I was better. I found that we, the lady nurses, dined with Dr. Sims, the chief, an American;

Mr. McCormac, an Irishman, taking the second mess; and there being a third downstairs for the juniors. There were some twenty surgeons and dressers in the Hospital, besides other assistants, and every bed and tent was crowded with wounded.

Every time the swing door opened the fearful smell came out, and by night I was seriously ill. However, of this I have nothing to say; except that I received the greatest kindness from everybody, a sister's care and nursing from Louise; and next day Dr. Marion Sims ordered me to sleep out of hospital, six in our room being too many. Louise came with me to the Hotel Croix d'Or, Sedan, from which every day we mounted to hospital, to our different duties. Ill as I was, the morning after my arrival I went with Louise round the wards, and suggested one or two things to Dr. Sims, which he begged might be carried out. Stores of all kinds were over abundant, and the great thing was

to enforce on the Infirmiers (soldiers permitted by the Prussians to assist) and on the women who had been hired to help, the first principle of order and cleanliness. The other lady nurses were all indefatigable, not only in nursing themselves, but in keeping others up to their duty, and as Dr. Sims remarks, in his 'History of an Ambulance,' a great change was soon evident.

Louise attended every operation, and her long Hospital training made her most useful on such occasions. It was certainly not conservative surgery that was practised there, and the operations were very numerous. Mr. McCormac was a very skilful operator, and it must have been a splendid school of surgery for all the young men of the Ambulance. I preferred our quiet jog-trot way at Orleans, when I saw it afterwards, where we had no secondary hæmorrhage and no pyemia, except about a dozen cases out of fourteen hundred, and one of those we cured; where we kept

on the legs and arms, even if they were to be useless afterwards, and only lost forty patients out of fourteen hundred. Perhaps it was not so scientific, but it was more satisfying. In both cases I am sure all was done that could be to cure or to alleviate, and if the style differed, it was a mere question. I cannot decide which was really best in a learned point of view.

But what was certainly not best was the system of waste that went on. Imagine three or four hundred sheets being burned because some men with pyemia had been sleeping in some of them, and of course the Infirmiers had not taken the trouble to put those sheets apart from the rest. Very many more had been sent to the military Hospital to be washed, and that institution being in the hands of the Prussians, those universal appropriators had kept them all. A strong remonstrance induced the return of a few. As for shirts and other linen, they shared the same fate; bale after bale

was opened and the contents used, but very few ever came from the wash. Indeed, the want of a proper system of laundry was one of the worst features of this great Ambulance. But as there was a storekeeper, whose business it should have been to have seen to the return of the linen, clean and in good order, to the store, no one else had a right to interfere. I had brought out, as I have said, a few private stores, and I was very thankful that among them were half a dozen bottles of sherry; for I distrusted the water very much, especially after Louise's tale, how disagreeable it was when she went there, three days before I arrived, so much so that she avoided touching it. Several of the young men however, were ill, and the water grew worse and worse. At last they resolved to search the well, and found three dead Zouaves. The water after that went by the name of "Eau de Zouaves." And this said sherry, too, was the cause of much refreshment to several weary

travellers who came by that way, on business or pleasure bent; for the Caserne Asfelde became the great sight of Sedan. It is not for me to enter into any medical details. Mr. McCormac's book, just published by Churchill, does that.

I will simply give *our* impressions of the Ambulance. Caserne Asfelde was a barrack. A long corridor ran down it, opening on a central staircase, the wards lying on each side; the walls were whitewashed, and the floors, asphalte, very difficult to keep clean, the water settling in the small holes of the asphalte; and no sanitary arrangements whatever. But there was a free current of air through every ward, and plenty of clean linen, and these make up for many deficiencies. The chief, Dr. Marion Sims, was a charming American, with courtly manners, and a certain way about him that impressed one at once with his being a man of talent, and not only that, but a man of strong common sense, and the

kindliest and merriest of companions into the bargain. Then came his colleague, Mr. McCormac, a genial Irishman, a splendid surgeon, and a gentle and sympathising man.

Père Bayonne, a Dominican, the Catholic chaplain, must not be forgotten. We often recall his bright, round, rosy face, his white flannel robe, always spotless in its purity, and leading one to speculate who did *his* washing, ever ready for duty, equally ready to share in the innocent gaiety of his young friends, his friendly morning greeting, and his loving lament over the lads, 'Good boys! dear boys! if they would only say their prayers, but they never do unless they have got the cholera.' Perhaps the worthy father meant in his own rite; for if ever deeds proved faith it was in the case of the brave and skilful men who formed the Anglo-American Ambulance. Their new chief wronged us much after that; but we

have a warm corner still in our hearts for the 'boys' of that ambulance.

Now, Père Bayonne was caterer for the second mess, and M. Monod, the Protestant chaplain, was caterer for the third. It was, indeed, a re-union of Christendom in those days of war. M. Monod was a quiet, well-bred, earnest young man, slight and pale. Two greater contrasts could not be to each other than the Dominican father and the Protestant pastor, yet they lived together as brothers. Then Turco and Charlie must not be forgotten. Charlie was Dr. Sims' black servant, and cook to the first mess; and Turco was a wounded man, properly a prisoner, but adopted as servant by Dr. Pratt, and new christened John. Both were black and amusing, and had a peculiar way of revenging themselves on any assembled *coterie* they did not like—by cooking the dinner most infamously. While Dr. Sims was there, Charlie dare not play this

prank; afterwards he took a dislike to several members of the mess, and thus revenged himself. I should say they suffered severely, but I was, by order of Dr. Sims, dining out of hospital, and so escaped the infliction; besides, I had been warned of it, and specially avoided becoming a victim to Charlie's revenge. I did dine there one day, by accident, and the mutton was raw and blue. I mildly observed, 'Oh, Charlie, Charlie! you could do better than that,' and Charlie replied, as if it were his full justification, 'But, Missus, Charlie did not know you were coming.'

Every bed in the building was occupied by wounded men, mostly French; whilst cases of fever were transferred to the tents. The kitchen arrangements were very poor, no roasting or frying could be done, and the men got tired of perpetual soup and bouillon. No regular diet tables could be carried out. They were drawn up and looked very busi-

ness-like, hanging over the beds, but an attempt to change the hours of the meals and vary the diet was a failure, owing to the fact that the cooks were French prisoners under a military superintendent, and were obliged to return to their quarters by six o'clock, so that the last meal of the day was about four and the first not till 7 A.M. next morning, certainly too long an interval. The effort to remedy this, by giving eggs and brandy, sago, milk, and other things, was not, I think, a successful one. French soldiers are not accustomed to so full a diet as we English, and I attribute a good deal of the dysentery and diarrhœa which prevailed to this system being sometimes carried out over zealously. Certainly the laundry and the kitchen were our weak points, and unless the plan had been utterly changed, and we had had sufficient help to organise them in our way, it was unavoidable.

It was fortunate, too, that the weather was

lovely and the days long, for there were no means of lighting or warming the wards. The Caserne stood very high, 'exposed to all the winds that blew,' and had the month been as cold as an English September is sometimes, we should have had great trouble in keeping the patients warm. They were all, with one or two exceptions, Roman Catholics; but Père Bayonne did not institute any religious services in the wards, nor was Mass ever celebrated there. Every attention was, however, given to the spiritual needs of the dying. On the whole, and considering that it was an Ambulance formed in a barrack under the circumstances of being in the midst of a battle and on a battle-field, it went on as well as possible, and the skill and attention of the surgeons, the ample supply of linen, medicines, and all extras, fully made up for any minor evils.

CHAPTER XVI.

CASERNE ASFELDE.

To give a detailed account of daily labours in hospitals would be only wearisome. Very few incidents worth recording occur in the quiet monotony of such work, but a few sketches may interest the reader. One ward was occupied by wounded officers, amongst them several who had served with our army in the Crimea. One of them was a gallant old captain, whose faithful companion, a dog, was allowed to range at will in the Hospital and sleep on his master's bed. A legend was extant that this dog had gone through the Crimean campaign; but as the creature was quite young, and the Russian war some sixteen years ago,

the story was evidently apocryphal. What was true was, that the dog followed his master into the battle, and was found watching by him when he was picked up, severely wounded, and brought into Sedan.

Another was the colonel of a line regiment. He had been shot through the throat, his case was a most interesting one, and his recovery was a feat in surgery. Every care was bestowed upon him by Dr. Sims and Mr. Mc Cormac. The wound was cured, and he accompanied Mr. McCormac to Brussels when the Caserne was finally evacuated; but there, like so many others, he drooped and pined. His regiment were all dead or prisoners, his career blighted, his country lost, for he was too thorough a soldier to believe in raw levies of Gardes Mobiles and Francs-tireurs, and he died of a broken heart.

Perhaps we saw less of this ward than almost any other, for all the afternoon it was filled with ladies and gentlemen, citizens of

Sedan, who came up to visit the officers, bringing with them most unwholesome presents of sweet cakes and bonbons and not very ripe fruit. This was at last put a stop to; but as soon as the officers were all evacuated, by death or removal, the nuisance ceased of itself, for the compassion and interest of the visitors did not extend to the soldiers' wards. I was much surprised on being requested by one lady to take her to a ward farther on, where a soldier was now placed who had been changed from some other room; but the secret came out as we went along, for she explained that the young man was a nobleman in disguise, or rather in the ranks, and therefore was evidently, in her eyes, a fitting object of sympathy, in spite of his soldier's coat and worsted epaulettes. The wards were divided amongst the English ladies nursing there, and under them were male and female Infirmiers. The latter were, as a rule, idle and too fond of gossiping with each other, whilst any extra work, in the

way of a thorough wash down of the floors of the wards, required a great exertion of stern decision to enforce the Doctor's orders. The night-watch was taken by two Sisters of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, whilst during the day we were assisted by two sisters of the Order of Little Sisters of the Poor.

Some days after our arrival, Dr. Webb requested the services of two of the English ladies with that part of the Ambulance serving at Balan, and two accordingly went there. About ten days afterwards arrived a clergyman with two Protestant Sisters. Their dresses were, if possible, more conventual than those of the French Sisters, whose astonishment at hearing that these good ladies were not members of their Church was excessive. The German Protestant Deaconesses they could understand, but not these Sisters, and poor Père Bayonne gave it up in despair. After I had tried for half an hour to elucidate the matter, he only shrugged his shoulders

and observed, 'But why do they dress to imitate real Sisters!' Now, these good ladies had not been requested to come to Caserne Asfelde; however, their services were accepted in lieu of those of our ladies who were gone to Balan.

It so happened on the day of their arrival that I had left the Hospital about four o'clock, and feeling very ill had gone down to the Croix d'Or, and to bed. Louise came about eight, and related their arrival and the difficulties about their sleeping in Hospital. They had wanted a room to themselves, but that was impossible; so they had to make up a couple of beds in the general sleeping-room, making four in a very small space, and she hoped they would be comfortable. Next morning she went up to the Hospital, as usual, early, and I followed about noon. I found things anything but comfortable. The good Sisters had never undressed, and whether that was a conventual custom, or merely because

they would not unrobe in the presence of seculars, no one could decide; but certainly this could not go on long. To come out of wards full of bad odours in those heavy serge dresses, bringing with them that faint Ambulance smell which is so sickening, and not to change them day or night, would be a sure means of infection. Besides, they had breakfasted at the ladies' mess, with Dr. Marion Sims at the head of the table, and though the conversation was purposely kept as quiet and toned down as much as possible, they had requested separate meals, on the ground that it was frivolous, and, to crown all, they had been utterly shocked and horrified at finding a man's cap flung hastily down on one of their beds by Mr. Parker, who, as an old friend, had liberty before breakfast to wash his hands in the general sleeping-room of the ladies (which was used by day as a dining room).

It was so evident that they could not get

on there, in such a rough, rambling way of living, that I asked Mr. McCormac to send for our own two ladies to come back, and to send these good Sisters to take their places. He quite agreed, and going into the wards, I was confirmed in my opinion of the wisdom of the change, by finding that one at least spoke little or no French, and in the course of the afternoon the exchange was effected, in spite of a violent opposition on the part of their spiritual director (a clergyman of the Church of England who acted as their chaplain), who could not or would not see how much better it was they should work under their own Mother Superior, who was at Balan herself, and how unsuited they were for campaigning. They were most valuable nurses there, where all was quiet and the patients were few, and did splendid work; but their wonderful unadaptability to circumstances, their want of pliability, so to speak, and conforming to the actual

position, offer a strong contrast to the admirable manner in which, as we afterwards saw, the sisters of St. Aignan at Orléans could put aside their conventual habits, as far as was necessary, and found their rules as rules should be, of leather, not of iron, when Sisters have rough work to do.

Twice all our French Infirmiers were taken away as prisoners. Throughout the war, the Germans showed a singular disregard of the terms of the German Convention, and when remonstrated with prided themselves upon it, saying, 'Very true, you have the right, but we have the might.' To assert that these Infirmiers were soldiers simply, after they had been made assistants in Hospital, was absurd; they were all unarmed, of course, and might have been left till the Ambulance departed. But no; they were marched off at an hour's notice. The wounded, too, were evacuated long before they were in a fit state to travel. At this time, Mézières, about

twelve miles off, was still in French possession, and to this little city the poor fellows were sent, and from thence transferred to the towns in the north of France.

I cannot say that much consideration or kindness was shown by the German officials. They were the masters, and they made every one feel it.

The windows of the Caserne commanded a lovely view. Below us lay the town of Sedan, the blue river Meuse winding through it, crossed by a light iron-railed bridge. In a yard just beyond it were the captured mitrailleuses guarded by a couple of sentinels only. In the distance there were the rising hills, covered with trees and verdure, where the Prussian batteries had been planted, and in the valley between, houses and farms scattered here and there, conspicuous among them the Château Bellevue, where Napoleon passed his last night as Emperor.

The Meuse looked very fair to see, but the

fish were all dead in its poisoned waters, and I was surprised one day to see some men apparently fishing from the bank. 'What can they be fishing for?' I asked my companion, a German officer. 'They are fishing for eagles,' he answered. I looked puzzled, and he explained that they were fishing for the brass eagles which had adorned the shakos and helmets thrown into the river, and though the head-gear was ruined, when found, the brass ornaments were valuable. Day after day we saw carts full of rusty chassepots come in from the country round, for a strict order had been issued by the Prussians that all weapons found in the fields should be brought to the Bureau of the Commandant de Place, under pain of fine and imprisonment. They seemed innumerable, and they must, by their dirty, rusty look, have been abandoned during the retreat into Sedan, for those given up there by the prisoners were bright and clean.

On the same day, I went with this officer to get a pass for a carriage to Carignan, where there was an Ambulance we wanted to see, and in the street we met one of the Johanniter Ritters, or Knights of St. John, who asked my friend if he had heard of the arrival of port wine from some 'Merchants of the London Docks.' There was evidently a great deal of it, and the Knight said it had been sent for the sick and wounded, but really as for giving it amongst the Ambulances, it was nonsense. It was far more important to keep the soldiers who had to fight in good health, and he was going to distribute it amongst certain regiments who were going forward. I told our storekeeper when we came back, and he agreed that we were fully entitled to a share of the gift; it would be most acceptable. Good wine was very scarce, and he would go and apply for some. Apparently his application, if made, had no result, for we never saw a bottle in the hospital. It probably went to strengthen

King William's Uhlans as they rode forward on their way to Paris.

The stores of linen which Mr. Adams had brought from Putney were of the greatest use. They were good, and mostly new. Very much sent out by various Committees was old, and would not bear washing, and much was oddly chosen. We had many a laugh over the singular articles sent out, even including women's apparel. But indeed we had such a quantity of stores, that I am afraid it tended to waste and extravagance. Good wine was a difficulty. On one occasion Dr. Frank sent in from Balan an urgent request for some. There was none in Hospital, and I gave his messenger twenty-three bottles of very good claret, which had been given to me for our own special needs. This was to be paid back to me; but when I left Sedan fifteen bottles were still owing to me by the storekeeper, and I never had one word of thanks for having given all the wine I had to Dr. Frank. Thanks were

not needed, it was not given for that; but a little gracious courtesy between fellow-workers is surely a great point at such times. Dr. Frank probably never knew where it came from, and his envoy was by no means what might be called a gentlemanly man.

During the month we were at Sedan we had an almost unbroken series of cloudless weather, only one day of rain. The Prussian bands sometimes played in the Place Turenne, and the French population listened, half-sulky, half-admiring. 'The Prussians are dogs,' one man remarked to me, 'but the music goes well' (la musique marche bien). There were not at this time the acts of cruelty and violence which afterwards disgraced the German name round Orléans. Very heavy impositions had not yet been inflicted. The war was more civilised and humane, and had it ended there the Prussian laurels would have been untarnished; but war has a degrading effect on character, and when we met

at Orléans the German troops we had seen near Metz and Sedan the change was a sad and terrible one, and the next generation will feel the effect of their fathers having led a buccaneer life in France, whilst the little children of the vanquished are learning at their mother's knee stern lessons of vengeance and hatred.

Sedan was, however, a melancholy residence. No papers were published, no letters sent or received. All we got came to the nearest frontier town of Bouillon, and were brought on by private hand. That wonderful institution, the Feld-Post, had not yet developed its marvellous capacity for not conveying letters. Confiding souls were not betrayed into trusting to its tender mercies, and we only gained glimpses of the outside world now and then. There was a pause in great military operations. Paris was invested, but no important sorties had taken place, and Metz was still surrounded by the troops of

Prince Frederick Charles. It was the hush before the storm, the end of the first act of that great drama, and the days went quickly on. Now and then the gates of the city were shut very early. There were flying rumours of some French column, coming by this road or the other, to retake Sedan, but with what object it was impossible to tell. The country was occupied by the German troops, and the place, if taken, not defensible. It was possibly because the towns were useless to the plans of the French Generals, or else it was strange that places left with such small garrisons were allowed to remain in the enemy's possession. Being only women, not generals in command of great armies, we saw many things that puzzled us, as not being in accordance with common sense, as we thought; but doubtless they were all right.

All the French prisoners had been sent away by the end of the second week in September, and very few German troops remained.

Stray tourists visited the place, but the omnibus service from Bouillon was not yet reorganised. The railway communication was at an end, and there were great difficulties in getting to Sedan from the nearest station. But now and then came some bound on a sad errand, to search for the lost and loved. One was an old army surgeon of the First Empire, still dressed in the blue long-tailed coat, with crimson facings and huge gold epaulettes, and the enormous cocked hat of half a century ago. His only child, he told me, had been dangerously wounded in the knee. 'A captain, Madame,' he said, in answer to my enquiries, 'and a décoré. He has been well nursed here in a private family; but his mother pines to see her boy again, and I have come, Madame, yes, all the way from near Marseilles, to take him back to his mother. And they told me these Prussians love uniforms, so behold, I have put on the dress I wore so long ago. It is handsome still, is it not, Madame?

It will enforce respect.' Poor old gentleman, it made the tears well up to look at the faded uniform, and the tarnished lace, and the grey head, and think of the dying soldier, for dying he was, and the mother waiting till her husband brought back their 'boy.' I hope he died in his southern home, with his head on that tender mother's breast.

Yet sadder still was the mission of an English officer. His daughter had been betrothed to a Saxon gentleman, who, summoned to rejoin his regiment, left England and his bride-elect at twenty-four hours' notice. He fell in his first battle, shot through the heart, and the poor girl's father had come to search for the body and take it back to Saxony. It was found, and it was a relief to know that death must have been instantaneous. No lingering agony upon the field or in Hospital. Death had been more merciful, and this was all the consolation the father could take back to his sorrowing child; yet

that was much. A simple gift of cigars had been sent by her to be given to Saxon soldiers. They were left in my care. I sought out an Ambulance where there were wounded Saxons, and the trust was faithfully fulfilled. Such little incidents drifted up like spars from a wreck. Multiply this grief by hundreds and thousands of cases, and you will have one idea of war. For every soldier has a home and parents. Possibly 'a nearer one yet, and a dearer one,' wife or bride. It is a trite remark, but do we realise the force of it when we read of so many thousands 'killed and wounded'? There is one mourner at least for every one of that number—one hearth desolate for ever.

Sedan was at one time encumbered with thirty thousand wounded, that is, including the villages immediately around. Fever and diarrhœa were very prevalent, especially amongst the Bavarian troops, who ate large quantities of unripe grapes and apples. An

application was made by a physician of colour, Dr. Davis, of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, who had established a hospital just across the Meuse for the services of Louise and myself in his Ambulance, not so much to nurse the sick (he had no wounded), but to see that the German orderlies did their duty, and to prevent the entrance of green fruit. If his German orderlies were as idle and as inefficient, though kind and good-natured, as those we had afterwards at Orléans, he must have had hard times of it. Dr. Davis died of small-pox, about two months afterwards, at Pongy-sur-Meuse, where he had his Ambulance, beloved, and mourned by all who had ever come in contact with him. These Infirmiers went about with brassards on their arms and weapons by their sides, were drilled and taught as soldiers ready to take their part in any emergency, and expected to be waited upon as if they were generals. In short, the Ambulance corps of the German army was

a very large and powerful body, and, as the children would say, 'looked for all the world like soldiers,' and their own surgeons were certainly sometimes in awe of them. We remarked everywhere during the war the vast proportion of German wounded. It was so near Metz, at Sedan, and afterwards at Orléans. Their losses must have been enormous. Will a true statement be ever published? Perhaps not. They do not care to show at what a costly price victory may be purchased.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNDER WHOSE ORDERS?

DAY after day passed on, unvaried by any startling incidents. Death carried off many a poor fellow, in spite of care and nursing, and the Hospital became gradually emptied. The tents were taken down, and at last so few patients remained that they were all accommodated on the upper floor, and many of the surgeons and nurses left. Père Bayonne was superseded at last, though the first attempt to replace him by a Jesuit priest resulted in a ludicrous scene. The good father was sitting outside the entrance-door, chatting with some of the 'boys' and smoking his afternoon cigar, when a thin, spare, ascetic-looking priest in black came up

the hill, and announced himself to his reverend brother as being sent by the Archbishop of Rheims to take the duty of chaplain there. Père Bayonne remarked that the said Archbishop had nothing to do with him. He did not belong to his diocese. He had been attached to the Ambulance as chaplain before it left Paris, and intended to remain with it. The black priest grew excited, and said then he would go himself to the Archbishop of Paris and obtain the order to do duty instead of Père Bayonne. The worthy Père chuckled, and replied, 'Pray do; go and look for him amongst the Prussian bayonets.' At this defiance the other grew more angry still, and high words ensued. At last one of the 'boys' suggested an appeal to arms, or rather fists, and Père Bayonne, entering into the spirit of the scene, began to turn up his white flannel sleeves; on seeing which the Jesuit fled down the hill, and declined the combat. Père Bayonne remained till Dr. Marion Sims left, and went to

Brussels with him, having arranged to rejoin the Ambulance when it took up fresh ground. The service as chaplain was done by two of the priests from the city, but the father's rival never returned again.

About the end of September I spent one day in going round the villages on the battle-field of Sedan. Balan and Bazeilles were too sadly familiar to me, and both were still desolate and deserted. No attempt had been made in either to repair damages; though in Bazeilles two or three families were living on the ground-floor of their houses, having put up a piece of sail to replace the ceiling and roof. More utter wreck and ruin could not be seen.. The little town must be entirely rebuilt before its industrious and once thriving population can return to it. Whatever share the inhabitants may have taken in the battle, surely their punishment was a savage one. It was often called in France the great crime of the war, and certainly nothing equalled it,

Chateaudun excepted. La Chapelle, La Moncelle, and all the villages showed traces of the 'work of war.' Many houses had been destroyed by bombs, the churches occupied by the wounded, and almost every tenable house turned into an Ambulance. It is honourable to the people of that neighbourhood, indeed all over the seat of war, that no credible accounts have ever been published of any ill-treatment of German wounded by the poor, miserable villagers. Amidst all their natural feelings of irritation against the invader, they never forgot the sacred duty of kindness to the wounded, and not only refrained from all acts of violence, or even annoyance, but, on the contrary, gave their best efforts to aid the sufferers. Many impoverished themselves in this noble cause, but no pecuniary acknowledgment has ever been made by the German Government of these disinterested services. Perhaps they were included in the 'rights of a conqueror,' as were so many other things.

We passed by the plateau of Floing, where the White Cuirassiers and the Imperial Guard fell *en masse* together. The road beyond dips down towards the Meuse, but on the north side rises abruptly; here and there are gorges, and in one, which opens out towards Sedan, are the villages of Givonne, La Chapelle, La Moncelle, and Illey. In the deep descent of the road the greatest slaughter had occurred; the fire of the batteries had destroyed friend and foe alike. A month had passed since that fatal day, but the traces of the battle were visible still. Men and horses had been too lightly buried, and sad remains of mortality were yet to be seen. In the villages we visited the Ambulances. They seemed well supplied with all necessaries. A few extra comforts were wanting, and a list of these was taken down for Captain Brackenbury, at Arlon, and so perfect were all his arrangements that no doubt the missing articles arrived within a couple of days. Often and often afterwards, amidst the destitution at

Orléans, we had to lament that *he* was not '*Ubiquitous.*' His energy, his decision, his clear judgment, would have been invaluable. The National Society had no servant so indefatigable and trustworthy as Captain Henry Brackenbury, R.A.

At Floing we visited an Ambulance where many wounded were placed in long wooden sheds. The gift of a few cigars was gratefully accepted. Everywhere ruined houses and half-deserted villages showed the ravages of war, but most of the wounded had been removed. Miss Monod's Ambulance was at this time working at Pouilly-sur-Meuse. All through the war this devoted lady and her companions worked hard during danger and privation such as fell to the lot of few, and though a French International Ambulance, friends and foes met with equal care and kindness. I trust and believe it was so in all places where there were wounded to be cared for.

On the 24th of Sepember Dr. Marion Sims left for Brussels and England, and was succeeded in the joint command with Mr. McCormac of the Anglo-American Ambulance by his son-in-law, Dr. Pratt, to whom he bequeathed his authority and the money he had in store. Shortly before this, Captain Henry Brackenbury had paid the Ambulance a visit, and I had had a long conversation with him. When he first ordered our ladies from Donchery to Sedan he had given a written paper into Louise's charge, placing us under the orders of Mr. McCormac (as the English chief), and instructing us, when discharged by him from our duties with his Ambulance, to proceed to Arlon (Captain Brackenbury's head-quarters), and report ourselves there for further orders. On the occasion of our interview he reiterated this order, and impressed upon me that *no one*, not the President of the British Society himself, could give us any orders, except through him-

self, as their appointed agent on the Continent. I told him I was very thankful to know who was our commander, and that all directions he gave should be fully carried out. He expressed himself as perfectly satisfied with all that had been done, and begged me to write to him if anything occurred to require his aid. Thus our future course was clear.

After Dr. Marion Sims left, the patients were rapidly evacuated. Only two officers remained—the poor colonel, and a cheerful, contented, merry little captain, whose thigh had been fractured, and who, though longing to return to his wife and family near Nice, was the most patient and grateful of men. His delight at, and enjoyment of, any little delicacy added to his dinner were charming to behold. He was all alone in a great ward, and so glad when anyone would go and sit with him and chat over his Crimean experiences and the present campaign, so soon ended for him. He told us how he was

struck by a ball and fell, how he was dragged into some out-of-the-way stable or barn, with nothing to eat or drink and no surgical attendance, till early next morning came some of the doctors of the Anglo-American Ambulance, and dressed all their wounds, and offered to take the worst wounded back to their Hospital. One of these, a superior officer, declined to go, unless he could have special accommodation—a little room to himself, or something of the sort—and as this could not be given in the crowded state of the Ambulance, he preferred to wait some other chance. The poor captain immediately put in his claim—if only a mattress amongst the soldiers, it would be luxury to him—so he was substituted for the colonel and brought away, to be kindly and skilfully tended with all that science and sympathy could do. The colonel was taken to some other Ambulance; perhaps was placed in a private house. There were many wounded so cared for; but it

rendered the discovery of their fate by their friends more difficult, as the general lists were not very correctly kept, and with such a pressure of business, so many deaths, such countless prisoners, such hosts of wounded, it is not to be wondered at.

In and around Sedan we found a very large proportion of German wounded, and this in spite of their men being transferred to the rear in every case where it was safe to transport them. Dr. Frank's Ambulance at Balan, and near Bazeilles (part of the Anglo-American), is evidence of this. Château Monvilliers, where Mrs. Capel established so well-managed a Hospital, had only Bavarians in it; there may have been one or two French, but I think not. It was the same case with Dr. Webb at Balan, also part of our Ambulance. He had all Germans. Dr. Davis, at Pongy-sur-Meuse, had 300 sick and wounded, all Bavarians, and instances of this could be multiplied. At Caserne Asfelde, as

I have said, we had almost all French; all French, indeed, after the first few days. The German losses must have been enormous; to judge by these facts, far more than the French. The peasants of the burying parties told us the same, though they added that the Germans buried their dead instantly, and before they buried the French, so that it was impossible accurately to judge of the proportionate loss.

The Caserne was emptying fast by this time (the first week of October), and Dr. Pratt went to Brussels to receive his orders from the French International, to which the Ambulance belonged. On his return a meeting was held, and the result was the division of the Ambulance into two; one part remaining under the charge of Dr. Pratt, the other under that of Dr. Frank. Louise and myself were selected by Dr. Pratt to accompany his Ambulance, with the sanction of the British Society, represented by Captain Brackenbury.

Of the adventures of Dr. Frank and his Ambulance we can tell nothing. The All Saints Sisters accompanied it. They went to Brussels, and from thence to Chalons and Epernay, in the German lines; whilst our orders were to go into Paris, if possible, if not into French lines—a very fair division of assistance, as it seems. By the Society's accounts, Dr. Frank received some 7,000*l.* from the British Society. Assuredly 700*l.* would more than represent what Dr. Pratt received from them; but then, as his Ambulance was also borne on the books of the French Society, he was not entitled to so much. Still, the disparity is enormous.

Mr. McCormac gave Louise and myself our discharge, in compliance with Captain Brackenbury's orders, and we went to Arlon to report ourselves, and obtain the necessary sanction to continue with Dr. Pratt's portion of the Anglo-American Ambulance. I had written to the Chairman of the Executive

Committee (Colonel Loyd-Lindsay) to tell him we were leaving Sedan, were asked to accompany Dr. Pratt, and to beg him to speak to Captain Brackenbury about it, who was for a few days in England. At Arlon I received a telegram to say it rested entirely with Captain Brackenbury, who we found was expected that night. Mr. Capel was there in charge, but he preferred our seeing Captain Brackenbury. Meantime the Ambulance had taken a shorter route to Brussels, and we were somewhat anxious for the decision, which we fully intended to abide by. If I relate this in full, it is only because we have, I believe, been accused of 'insubordination.' There was none. We never disobeyed an order; and if there was misunderstanding as to orders, it simply arose from the Committee's confused idea as to whose authority was supreme—their own, or Captain Brackenbury's, or the Chairman's, or the Secretary's, or the Executive Committee, or

everybody in general and nobody in particular—for to this day we have not the slightest idea. We believed Captain Brackenbury, he evidently believed so too; but we were afterwards undeceived. However, on this occasion we waited for his arrival.

Early next day a telegram arrived from Brussels formally requesting our services with the Anglo-American Ambulance. Captain Brackenbury had not been found in Brussels, and Mr. Capel kindly took it upon himself to give the requisite order in the Captain's absence, whom we hoped to see at Brussels. We telegraphed this back to Dr. Pratt and started for Brussels. At the station Dr. M'Kellar met us. Captain Brackenbury had been seen, and had sent a note giving his full consent and attaching us for service to the Ambulance, not stipulating for any particular place or period of time, and to this hour that order remains uncontradicted.

I annex the two orders:—

'Arlon, Oct. 6.

'In the absence of Captain Brackenbury, and at the request of Dr. Pratt, as per telegram of to-day, I authorise Miss Pearson and Miss McLaughlin to join the Ambulance now headed by him, and they are at liberty to proceed to Brussels whenever they think proper. 'REGINALD CAPEL.'

'Brussels, Oct. 6.

'Dear Miss Pearson,—I have just seen Dr. Pratt, and was in the act of telegraphing to you to come here to join the Anglo-American Ambulance. Dr. M'Kellar now shows me your telegram. Pray go on with the Ambulance, as you wish it and Dr. Pratt wishes it. Miss McLaughlin will also be with you. I wish you every success. I remain yours faithfully,

'HENRY BRACKENBURY.'

Thus all was done in compliance with orders from the very first.

Brussels looked gay and full, crowded with

French refugees. We went to see the stores of the French International Society, and they seemed very scanty compared with the profusion of our own. We had an interview with Captain Brackenbury, who was all that was kind and courteous. He said he did not believe we should obtain permission to pass into Paris, but he thought we should find plenty of work in the immediate neighbourhood. Our departure was deferred some twenty-four hours, owing to the difficulty of getting on the waggons and horses. We much wished to pay Antwerp a visit, but Dr. Pratt requested none of his Ambulance to leave the city; so, like good soldiers, we obeyed our chief, as Dr. Pratt was now, and it was only at 7 P.M. on October 8 that we all left by the railroad for Rouen *viâ* Amiens. How to get on farther by rail or road remained to be seen, as changes on the route might occur at any moment, bridges be blown up and roads cut, for Normandy was preparing to

meet the invader. Amiens was reached at four in the morning, and as the train did not start till 6 A.M. we bivouacked in the station. At ten we reached Rouen, and it was decided that we were not to leave till 6 P.M., and get as far as St.-Pierre-au-Louviers, where the traffic ceased, sleep there, and proceed next morning by road *viâ* Dreux to Versailles.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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